

extracted from the works of Bareau, Filliozat and Lamotte, 'The expansion of Buddhism in Asia' from secondary works in French and 'Buddhism in the West' abbreviated from Peter Harvey's *Introduction to Buddhism*.

Vision emanates from a student in Pāli and Sanskrit in Sri Lanka who graduated from the University of Washington, Seattle, although latterly his interest seems to have been focused on shamanism (which might account for the disproportionate attention given to Tibetan esoteric culture in his otherwise excellent, balanced and sympathetic compilation). As with *Wisdom*, this is profusely illustrated and beautifully produced, this time in Singapore. For a beginner it represents an adequate overview of the historical and doctrinal field, comprising concise chapters on 'The Early Days of the Buddha', 'The Enlightenment', 'From Enlightenment to Death', 'Early Indian and Mahayana Buddhism', 'Theravada or Southern Buddhism', 'Buddhism in China', 'Buddhism in Japan', 'Buddhism in Tibet', and 'Buddhism Comes to the West' (although 'Buddhism in modern Europe' confines itself to two pages, one each for the UK and Samye Ling, followed by four pages for the USA). An appendix, 'Documentary References' includes 'Selected Buddhist sites' from Asia, 'Useful addresses', 'Glossary' and 'Further Reading'.

One regrets the absence of diacritical marks, otherwise the only quibbles this reviewer had was with the author's use of 'death' in the context of the Buddha and, on two occasions, the interpretation of *nirvana* as 'extinction' when an extension — 'of the defilements' — would have resolved this doctrinal misunderstanding.

A brace of books to treasure and enjoy!

RBW

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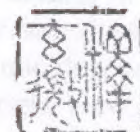
1991

KACĀYANAGŪṬĀ SŪTRA

Translated by John D. Nelson



連 訥 兒 良 過 蹄
過 波 羅 過 蹄 波 羅 增 蹄
蹄 菩 提 薩 婆 可



We welcome contributions to this journal, particularly in the field of Theravāda Buddhism in the present Theravāda tradition and early Buddhism in India, Central Asia and China.

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Frontispiece: the calligraphy in Sino-Vietnamese characters (Nôm) by Ven Thích Huyền-Vi reads:

thus :

GATE GATE PĀRAGATE

PĀRASAMGATE BODHI

SVĀHĀ !

The seals, engraved by Ven. Bhikkhu Dhamma-vīro of Thailand, convey the same meaning as the calligraphy.

KACCĀYANAGOTTA SUTTA

Translated by John D. Ireland

Thus I heard. At one time the Fortunate One was staying near (the city of) Sāvattthī in the Jeta Wood at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then the venerable Kaccāyanagotta approached the Fortunate One, prostrated himself and sat down to one side. Sitting there the venerable Kaccāyanagotta said to the Fortunate One, 'Sir, one hears people say "right view, right view"; to what extent, Sir, is there right view?'

'This world Kaccāyana, mostly holds to the pairs (of views): existence and non-existence.

To one who sees with perfect wisdom, Kaccāyana, the arising of the world as it has come to be, there does not occur the notion of non-existence in the world. To one who sees with perfect wisdom the ceasing of the world as it has come to be, there does not occur the notion of (permanent) existence in the world.

This world, Kaccāyana, is mostly bound by approach, grasping and inclination. But he who is not bound by that approach and grasping, that determination of mind, that inclination and tendency, he does not approach, does not grasp, does not determine, does not say "It is my self". He thinks, "Arising is just the arising of suffering, ceasing is the ceasing of suffering". Such a person does not doubt, is not perplexed. Herein, this knowledge is not dependent upon another. To this extent, Kaccāyana, there is right view.

"Everything exists", this, Kaccāyana, is one extreme.

"Everything non-exists", this, Kaccāyana, is the second extreme.

Not approaching either of these extremes, Kaccāyana, the Tathāgata teaches Dhamma by way of the middle:

With ignorance as condition, creative activities (come to be); with creative activities as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality; . . . the sixfold base . . . contact . . . feeling . . . craving . . . grasping . . . being . . . birth . . . ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Such is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance, creative activities cease . . . Such is the ceasing of this whole mass of suffering'.

(Saṃyutta Nikāya XII 15).

* * * * *

THE PROBLEM OF PRECANONICAL BUDDHISM

Christian Lindtner

The picture we get of the Buddha's teachings from the Pāli Canon — on the whole (but not in all details) the most ancient collection of documents available — is familiar to all of us: the doctrine is expressed in formulas about the Four Truths, the Three Signs, the twelve members of Dependent Origination, the Five Aggregates (*skandha*), etc.¹ Man constitutes nothing but five *skandhas*, they are impermanent, without a soul, in a word, suffering. Life is basically change, impermanence. At the root of the change that constantly takes place we find desire, ill-will and ignorance. The process of rebirth has been going on since time without beginning. Only by realizing the truth of the Buddha's teaching, especially the Four Noble Truths, can one bring the process to an end. This, in brief, is the Buddha's view of man and his religious ideal. Man, the world, the gods — everything is subject to constant change, the law of impermanence. There is no higher ideal than the peaceful cessation of change².

1 Among the numerous expositions based solely on the Pāli Canon, Hermann Oldenberg's *Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, which first appeared in 1881 (many reprints) still ranks as a classic (Engl. tr., *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, 1882, New Delhi 1992). The definitive modern work based on a much wider variety of sources is Étienne Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, des origines à l'ère Śaka*, Louvain 1958 (Engl. tr., *History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain-la Neuve 1988). There is a very useful bibliography by Constantin Régamey, *Buddhistische Philosophie*, Bern 1950. Less critical, but very comprehensive, is H. Nakamura (ed.), *Indian Buddhism. A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, Tokyo 1980 (repr. Delhi 1987). A very judicious selection of texts is given by E. Frauwallner, *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus*, Berlin 1969.

2 Or, to use a modern image: The highest bliss consists in the disposal of an engine that has finally run out of gas.

However, the Canon also contains passages that point in quite another direction, and these passages often, in addition, seem to have a rather archaic flavour. Many of them are in verse, some in prose. There are passages that speak of the existence of something permanent and unconditioned. We learn that Nirvāṇa is a place without change, that *viññāna* is initially pure and translucent (*prabhāsvara*), we hear of the Six Elements (*dhātu*) that seem to form an exception to the otherwise universal law of change, and there are passages that suggest the existence of a soul (*pudgala*), or the permanent laws of nature (*dharmatā*).

This state of affairs, naturally, has not failed to attract the attention of some Buddhist scholars. They noticed that it would be difficult to reconcile the two trends in the Canon: on the one hand the somewhat old-fashioned absolutist trend in many ways reminiscent of certain passages in the oldest Upaniṣads, on the other hand the more 'modern' features characteristic of later developments in 'Hīnayāna', above all the doctrine of universal impermanence (*dharmānityatā*).

Against this background some scholars in the decade just before the Second World War launched the idea of 'Precanonical Buddhism' into these studies. The main spokesman of this interesting theory was the great Polish scholar Stanisław Schayer³,

3 See his 'Precanonical Buddhism' *Archiv Orientalní* VII (1935), pp.121–32, and 'New Contributions to the Problem of Pre-Hīnayānistic Buddhism', *Polish Bulletin of Oriental Studies* I (1937), pp.8–17 (both articles have been reprinted in Marek Mejer (ed.), *Stanisław Schayer: O filozofowaniu Hindusów*, Warsaw 1988, pp.470–81 and 505–14 respectively). It should be noted, however, that prior to Schayer scholars such as L. de La Vallée Poussin and C.A.F. Rhys Davids had launched their opinions about a more original form of Buddhism than the one found in the Pāli Canon. Cf. G.R. Welbon, *The Buddhist Nirvāṇa and Its Western Interpreters*, Chicago 1968, with the review by J.W. de Jong in *Journal*

and the Scotsman A. Berriedale Keith⁴. It was not only the thunderstorm of the War that silenced their voices but also the fact that neither scholar lived to see the end of the catastrophe. Schayer died in 1941, Keith in 1944. Thereafter, the debate has largely been discontinued, although one of Schayer's students, the late Constantin Régamey, tried to revive it in a paper that appeared in a memorial volume dedicated to his teacher⁵. Some may have found the notion of precanonical Buddhism too speculative, others simply uninteresting.

On the other hand, it should be mentioned that some scholars, apparently unaware of the discussion about precanonical Buddhism (or at least not inclined to use the term), have expressed views that are quite compatible with such a theory. For instance, the Japanese scholar Noritoshi Aramaki has tried to elucidate the origin and development of certain basic Buddhist concepts such as the five *skandhas*, the *pratītyasamutpāda* formula, the *āyatana*s and the *dhātu*s. In his opinion we can find different 'strata', or layers, in the Pāli Canon, and by doing so we can see how Vedic ideas eventually developed and changed in the Canon, finally to become systematized and 'synthesized' by the Buddhist Sangha. In particular, the canonical doctrine of the five *skandhas* has a long and complex prehistory that can ultimately be traced back to much more primitive and unsophisticated notions associated with the figure of Yājñavalkya⁶. As with Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Dr Aramaki recognizes the

of *Indian Philosophy* I (1972), pp.396–403.

4 See his 'Pre-Canonical Buddhism', *The Indian Historical Quarterly* XII (1936), pp.1–20.

5 In *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* XXI (1957), pp.37–58.

6 Noritoshi Aramaki, 'A Text-stratum-analytic Interpretation of the Concept *Pañcaskandhas*', in *Jinbun*, Kyoto 1980, pp.1–36.

fundamental importance of the Dvayatānupassanā Sutta (= Sutta-Nipāta 724-65), 'because it is in this sutta that the Buddhist saṃgha tries to establish the central philosophy of Buddhism by synthesizing all the earlier expressions of the truth known in the Buddhist liberation (*sic!*) to the truth with the dual structure now formulated in the formula *catuḥsatya*: *duḥkha* and *duḥkha-samudaya* on the one hand and *duḥkhanirodha* and *duḥkha-nirodhagāminīpratipad* on the other'⁷.

Another attempt, in a somewhat different direction, is to be found in an interesting book entitled *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le bouddhisme ancien* by Kamaleswar Bhattacharya⁸. In the opinion of this author the Buddha actually believed in the existence of a permanent soul. The doctrine of *nairātmya* was only a means to attain the highest soul that we know from certain passages in the oldest Upaniṣads. The Buddha only denied what people in general considered to be the *ātman*. The *neti neti* of the Upaniṣads thus has become an appropriate parallel in the Buddhist dictum: *n' etaṃ mama, n' eso 'haṃ asmi, na m' eso attā*. Buddhist Abhidharma is held responsible for denying an absolute *ātman*, but in Mahāyāna the old notion was reintroduced. The Buddha's predilection for negative expressions about the *ātman* misled some Buddhists into believing that he denied the existence of the absolute. We are here, in the words of Auguste Barth, dealing with a 'naufrage métaphysique'. *Brahman*, *ātman*, *dharma*, *buddha* and *nirvāṇa* were originally more or less synonymous terms.

7 Ibid.

8 Paris 1973. — Bhattacharya only refers to three of Schayer's works, viz. *Vorarbeiten zur Geschichte der mahāyānischen Erlösungslehren*, Munich 1921, 'Die Erlösungslehren der Yogācāra's nach dem Sūtrālaṃkāra des Asaṅga', *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* II (1923), pp.29-123, and *Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Prasannapadā*, Cracow 1931.

This is not the place for me to discuss these ingenious speculations of Aramaki and Bhattacharya, although they certainly deserve careful consideration and serious assessment. Instead, I would like briefly to call attention to an old document which is only available in Chinese but which may contain some remnants of early Buddhism. This is the Bhadrupālaśreṣṭhiparipṛcchā belonging to the old Ratnakūṭa collection⁹. The main topic is *viññāna* but this text has absolutely nothing to do with later Yogācāra. Consciousness, or rather *viññāna*, cannot be grasped, it is not stained, it has no form or substance, it is subtle as the wind. Nevertheless, it transmigrates¹⁰ in the same way that the sun sheds its beams, as a pearl shines, or as wood emits fire. Our karma is reflected and accumulated in *viññāna* and the latter becomes the cause that produces and maintains, and eventually leaves physical bodies to take up new ones. *Viññāna* will take birth even in the Akaniṣṭha heaven to 'enjoy wonderful pleasures'. Here, again, we are confronted with ideas that can easily be traced back to closely related passages in the oldest Upaniṣads.

In my opinion it is somewhat unfortunate that the debate about precanonical Buddhism — versus canonical Buddhism (or Buddhisms) — has thus largely been discontinued. An awareness of the problem is essential, not just for a better and more adequate understanding of the most ancient developments of Buddhism and the relationship to Upaniṣadic and Vedāntic theories, but also for a proper assessment of certain ideas in early

9 Taishō XII, No.347, pp.178-86. A philological study of this text (available in two Chinese versions) is a desideratum. There is an English translation in G.C.C. Chang (ed.), *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras*, University Park 1983, pp.223-40.

10 The term for transmigration is *saṃsāra*, literally 'flowing together', namely of life and death, or of being and non-being. 'Life', then, is a continuous 'concatenation' of birth and death.

Mahāyāna, Mādhyamika as well as Yogācāra, and in the Ratnagotra tradition. Thus the Mahāyāna conceptions of the 'absolute' in some ways seem to point back to some basic notions in 'pre-canonical Buddhism'. Obviously it makes a big difference whether we look upon Mahāyāna as an *innovation* in Buddhism, or as a *conservative reformation*. Perhaps Mahāyāna here and there preserves old elements more faithfully than the Theravāda or other lineages.

Let us come back to Schayer who, unfortunately, never found the opportunity to develop his theory about precanonical Buddhism in any systematic and exhaustive way. He was always careful to stress the preliminary and hypothetical (or even speculative) nature of his views on this matter, so let me briefly summarize his opinions. In various ancient sources we find a quotation from the 'Śaḍdhātusūtra'¹¹ to the effect that man's personality (*pudgala*) consists of six elements (*dhātu*), viz. earth, water, air, fire, ether (*ākāśa*) and spirit (*viññāna*). We are here, as Schayer observes, confronted with a very primitive 'graduated scale' (*sic!*) of subtleness: water is more subtle than air, *ākāśa* more subtle than fire, and *viññāna* more subtle than *ākāśa*. This model is clearly related to various versions of ancient Indian *bhūta-vāda* ('cosmic physiology') which accepts the reality of the invisible consciousness, or spirit. Furthermore, Schayer calls our attention to the Mahāyāna distinction between a *rūpakāya* and a *dharmakāya* of the Buddha. This juxtaposition of *rūpa* and *dharma*, according to Schayer, is 'a survival of a precanonical Buddhism which actually divided the world into two opposite

categories of *rūpa* and *dharma*, matter and spirit. This distinction can be understood in the light of Buddhist cosmology. The material world comprises the *kāmadhātu* and the *rūpadhātu*, the spiritual world comprises the *ārūpyadhātu*. The immaterial world consists of four 'levels' (*āyatana*), or 'lots', whose common characteristic is their infinity: *ākāśānantyāyatana*, *viññānānantyāyatana*, *ākīmcanyānantyāyatana* and *naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana*. The material world is impermanent and limited, but not so the infinity of the spiritual world. One cannot 'localize' the spiritual world, but it does possess 'extensionality' as Schayer points out¹².

The term *dharmadhātu* then, as opposed to *rūpadhātu*, denotes 'a permanent, eternal reality, undestroyable (*sic!*), transcending the senses and realized through the mind alone analogically to the Brahman of Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad IV 4.19: *manasaivānudraṣṭavyam*'¹³.

Finally, Schayer combines the doctrine of the Śaḍdhātusūtra with the antithesis *rūpa-dharma*. (This, of course, is pure speculation.) The material world is perceived by the senses, *ākāśa* and *viññāna* by mind only. The idea of the six elements forming a unity opens the possibility of assuming their transformation (*pariṇāma*) on the basis of *viññāna*. So here, according to Schayer, we find the precanonical background of Mahāyāna Viññānavāda. We are here reminded of such canonical passages as Aṅguttara Nikāya I 10: *pabhassaraṃ idaṃ cittaṃ taṃ ca kho āgantukehi upakilesehi upakiliṭṭhaṃ*, as well as Dīgha Nikāya I 223 and Majjhima Nikāya I 329: *viññānaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ*

11 See É. Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse* III, Louvain 1970, p.1217. Although no sūtra exists under this title, I have used this term in the sense of text, passage, doctrine (of the six elements).

12 Schayer (1935), p.128.

13 *Ibid.*, p.129.

*sabbato-pabham*¹⁴. Also important is the passage that compares *vijñāna* to a man that swings across a ditch by using a rope¹⁵. Transmigration¹⁶, in other words, works on the basis of *vijñāna*.

In a nutshell, Schayer's view of precanonical Buddhism was this: the doctrine of *universal* impermanence was unknown. Change belongs to the world of the senses only. Space and consciousness (or spirit) are pure, permanent and substantial. They may not be 'located' anywhere, but they possess 'extension'. Liberation (much as in Jainism, one may add) was to be found somewhere on 'the top of the world'.

So much for Schayer with whom I tend to agree on the whole though I also admit that much of this is speculative and hypothetical in practice. The only aspect that I have trouble accepting is his view of the spiritual world as something possessing 'extension' without being located anywhere. This, I think, runs against the *ipsissima verba* of the texts in question.

I would like to expand Schayer's views as follows: In the Canon we find at least two sets of views concerning *Nirvāṇa*, an older and a more recent. The old conception (represented by *Dīgha Nikāya* I 223, *Udāna* 80, etc.) is one of a *place one can actually go to*. It is called *nirvāṇadhātu*, has no border-signs (*animitta*)¹⁷, is localized somewhere beyond the other six

dhātus (beginning with earth and ending with *vijñāna*) but is closest to *ākāśa* and *vijñāna*. One cannot visualize it, it is *anidarśana*, but it provides one with firm ground under one's feet, it is *dhruva*; once there one will not slip back, it is *acyutapada*. As opposed to this world, it is a pleasant place to be in, it is *sukha*, things work well. As providing an escape from this world it is called *nihsaraṇa*. The idea of *Nirvāṇa* as a place one can actually go to, *not* metaphorically speaking, has a close parallel in the way of thinking we find in the oldest *Upaniṣads*, and probably in the way of thinking among the various ancient *śramaṇa* movements. Think of the idea of four stages of the soul: the waking state, dream, sleep and the fourth state beyond that. Think of the world of men, that of the fathers and of the gods. Surely the ancient sages conceived these as places one could actually go to. Hence, for instance, the warning against waking up a person asleep: his soul might not have time to return. And when the Buddhist canonical writings speak of rebirth in heaven or in hell it is the same thing: they are places one actually *goes to* (*upapadyate, eti, gacchati*, etc.). After all, in those days of yore knowledge of geography and cosmology was extremely limited and entirely different from what it is nowadays.

But *how* could one go there according to the 'precanonical' view? We can, perhaps, not be quite sure, but we may well assume some spiritual path, some sort of shamanistic travel of the spirit. Think of the descriptions of the perfected yogin, common to most traditions of thought in ancient India. Mostly they are convinced that an accomplished human being can touch the sun and the moon, dive into the ground, walk on water, etc. Or I may quote Schayer again: 'Der Wille eines Yogin's kennt daher keine

14 I am using the editions of the Pali Text Society compared with various more recent Oriental editions.

15 Schayer (1935), p.131.

16 See n.10.

17 Among the indispensable works of reference may be mentioned: V. Trenckner *et al.*, *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, Copenhagen 1924 ff. (CPD); E. Waldschmidt *et al.*, *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden*, Göttingen 1973 ff. (SWTF); F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, New Haven 1953 (BHSD); E.M. Hare *et al.*, *Pāli Tipiṭikam*

Concordance, London 1952 ff.

Grenzen; mit den acht Wunderkräften ausgestattet, waltet er in dem ganzen Kosmos nach seinem Belieben. Er wird unsichtbar und fliegt durch die Luft, er wird klein wie ein Atom und gross wie der Äther, er liest die fremden Gedanken und die Götter in Himmel erzittern aus Angst vor der unendlichen Macht seiner Kasteiung. So ist die Erlösung auch für den Yoga eine rein menschliche Errungenschaft, die man seiner eigenen Kraft und Anstrengung verdankt¹⁸. The ancient Buddhists, of course, shared this conviction. Think, for instance, of the passage in Dīgha Nikāya II 89: The Buddha is too impatient to wait for the ferry to take him and the monks across the Ganges. What does he do then? Brings himself and the monks across in a jiffy by means of magic. An efficient and inexpensive way to travel!

So why not travel to Nirvāṇa in the same way? The only difference is that this sort of travel takes place by means of knowledge, and this sort of knowledge is entirely different from the one we are used to. We are dealing with 'magical knowledge'. Schayer explains it well: 'Die Schwierigkeit, die uns gerade in diesem Punkt entgegentritt, ist allerdings nicht unbeträchtlich, sie lässt sich indessen leicht beseitigen, sobald man bedenkt, welche Rolle das Wissen in den "primitiven" Kulturen zu spielen pflegt, dass es nämlich überall als eine Art magisches Fluiden aufgefasst wird, mit dessen Hilfe der Wissende nach seinem Belieben in der Verlauf der kosmischen Geschehnisse einzugreifen vermag. Mit

18 Schayer, *Vorarbeiten*, . . . p.19: 'The will of a yogi, then, does not know of any limits. In possession of the eight magical powers he moves in the entire cosmos as he wishes. He becomes invisible and flies through the air, he becomes as small as an atom and expansive like the ether, he reads the thoughts of other people, and the gods in heaven fear the endless power of his asceticism. Thus, for yoga, liberation is a purely human achievement that is due to one's own power and striving' (CL).

anderen Worten, es liegt hier der Gedanke zu Grunde, dass das Wissen selbst eine *wirksame Potenz* ist, so dass es genügt einem Gegenstand zu *kennen*, um ihn allein dadurch zu *beherrschen* und zu *besitzen*'¹⁹.

We cannot be quite sure *how* this idea of *nirvāṇadhātu* as a place of escape, a sort of no-man's-land, developed. But perhaps we can derive some help from an old canonical passage. The fragment I have in mind is found in the works of later authors such as Bhavya, Yaśomitra and Śāṅkara²⁰. It sounds very archaic: a brahmin is asking the Buddha where earth has its foundation (*pratiṣṭhā* is the word — a significant term also in the oldest Upaniṣads). On water, is the answer. Water, again, is based on wind, wind (or air) on *ākāśa*. But *ākāśa* itself has no foundation. There may be something beyond that, but in this passage the Buddha is reluctant to speak about it: *atisarasi, atisarasi*, 'you are going too far, you are going to far!' All this sounds almost like an echo of Taittirīya Upaniṣad II 1: 'Aus eben diesem *ātman*, fürwahr, ist der [leere] Raum geworden, aus dem [leeren] Raum der Wind, aus dem Wind das Feuer, aus dem Feuer die Wasser, aus den Wassern die Erde . . .'²¹.

19 *Ibid.*, pp.6-7: 'The difficulty that meets us at this point is not, in fact, insuperable, but one can overcome it when one considers the rôle that knowledge usually plays in "primitive" cultures, i.e., it is always conceived as a sort of magic fluid, with the help of which a knowledgeable person can, if he wishes, interfere with the course of events in the world. In other words, the basic idea is that knowledge itself is an *efficient potency*, so that it is enough to *know* a thing in order thereby to *master* and *possess* it' (CL).

20 See O. Qvarnström, *Hindu Philosophy in Buddhist Perspective*, Lund 1989, p.120 for the text (Sanskrit/Tibetan) and further references. See also K. Mimaki (ed.), *Blo gsal grub mtha'*, Kyoto 1982, p.81 ('Source originale non identifiée').

21 'Out of this *ātman*, surely, [empty] space has arisen, out of [empty] space wind [has arisen], out of wind fire, out of fire water, out of water earth'. I am

Can we not easily imagine that this is the sort of answer someone ignorant of modern cosmology would give if asked the question: What do the elements rest upon? We may imagine ourselves standing on the beach looking over the ocean. Land seems to rest upon the encompassing mass of water, water on wind (or air), wind on space. To get beyond that one will have to undertake a spiritual journey, and the ancient Indian yogis were specialists in that sort of travel, as we have seen. In this way one will finally reach the ultimate *āyatana*, *dhātu*, *pada*, *sthāna*, etc., beyond the sun and the moon.

In other words, the notion of *nirvāṇadhātu* originally developed as a result of purely cosmological, not soteriological, speculations. It points back to a period more interested in the world around us than in the world within us.

It may, perhaps, be a little difficult for 'pure' Indologists to think in these terms, but for a historian of comparative religion there should be no such problem. There is a close parallel to the development of philosophy in ancient Greece. The pre-Socratic philosophers were *physiologoi*, natural philosophers, as will be recalled. They tried, in various ways, to explain the manifold world of the senses by reducing it to various basic elements, *arkai*, such as earth, or water and so on²². It was only much later that philosophy found itself concerned with questions of ethics,

here quoting from the most recent translation, that of W. Rau, *Festschrift der Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft an der Johann Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main*, Wiesbaden 1984, pp.349–73. As Rau remarks: 'Man sollte erwarten: "Aus eben diesem *brahman*. . ." (instead of "Aus eben diesem *ātman*", i.e. one would expect '*brahman*' instead of '*ātman*').

²² See, for instance, G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge 1966. See also W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol.I, Cambridge 1962.

epistemology and psychology. A similar line of development can be observed in dealing with Indian philosophy.

The more recent conception of *Nirvāṇa* is a purely psychological one: liberation is a state of mind free from passions such as desire, ill-will and confusion. It is by no means a place somewhere in the universe to which one can go, as if to some foreign country. Even later, from an epistemological point of view, *Nirvāṇa* is conceived as an empty object of cognition free from dichotomy (*advaya-jñāna*). We are here very far away from the original Buddhist idea of *Nirvāṇa* as a place, literally speaking, where the wind does not blow any more — perhaps the original etymology of the term *Nirvāṇa*?

This then brings me to the second main topic of this paper: Nāgārjuna's conception of *Nirvāṇa* and *viññāna*. The point I wish to make here is that this celebrated philosopher is very much aware of the conflicting tendencies in the old Canon (but, of course, not of their historical background), and that he takes great pains to explain them, explain them away, that is.

By introducing the distinction between precanonical and canonical Buddhism, we are enabled to suggest that a development of ideas took place. To begin with, as said, *viññāna*, *Nirvāṇa* and *ākāśa* were somehow considered pure and permanent, absolute if you wish. Later, when the law of universal impermanence (perhaps partly as a reaction to Brahmanism) threatened to usurp the throne, they were considered, or tended to be considered, dependent and impermanent like all other things in the world of the senses.

Nāgārjuna did not see things in an historical perspective, and this invariably confronted him with the problem of having to reconcile conflicting statements found in the Canon available to him. When scholastics and theologians (as opposed to critical

historians) are confronted with contradictions in their holy scriptures they tend to resort to *interpretations* so as to 'reconcile' them. In general, as opposed to such theologians, historians have the advantage of being able to adopt the theory of evolution or development in dealing with the ideas of the past. This saves them having to explain away contradictions and difficulties by speculation and 'models of interpretation', etc.

However, as mentioned, Nāgārjuna was no historian. In his writings we find him struggling with the conflicting ideas about *viññāna* and Nirvāṇa that he inherited. Again and again one must admire how accurately he records the canonical sources.

The first thing that strikes us is that almost 2,000 years ago Nāgārjuna struggled with much the same problems that certain scholars struggled with in the Thirties. Schayer would undoubtedly have been pleasantly surprised to learn that Nāgārjuna was as puzzled by the *Śaddhātusūtra*, by *Dīgha Nikāya* I 223, etc., as he was himself. In a word, the works of Nāgārjuna serve to support the suspicion of modern scholars concerning the two trends in the ancient canonical scriptures.

In the writings of Nāgārjuna, as in the Canon, we find heterogeneous ideas about Nirvāṇa and *viññāna*. When we take a closer look at these it immediately becomes clear that Nāgārjuna evinces a very thorough knowledge of the various canonical statements about Nirvāṇa. In a possibly contrived manner, he sees the canonical conceptions of Nirvāṇa from three points of view: psychological, ontological and epistemological. The distinctions tend to be a bit blurred now and then, and the basic reason for this is partly that he is dealing with notions that have entirely different origins, partly that the ancient Indians hardly made the same distinctions between ontology and epistemology that we do.

For the *psychological* conception of Nirvāṇa, Nāgārjuna

quotes the *Samyuktāgama* which defines liberation as the extinction of *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *moha*, i.e., a peaceful state of mind. This is Buddhism as sheer therapy. For the *ontological* conception, Nāgārjuna quotes the well-known *Udāna* passage to the effect that Nirvāṇa is a *place* where earth, water, fire, wind, space, consciousness, sun and moon, etc., are no longer present²³. We shall come back to this in a moment. For the *epistemological* conception, he refers to passages that speak of Nirvāṇa as the highest truth, as the 'object' of non-dual cognition, and as free from deceit (*amoṣadharma*)²⁴.

Moreover, Nāgārjuna is aware of the two kinds of Nirvāṇa, one with *upadhi* remaining, and one without any residue of *upadhi*. The distinction is canonical (even precanonical, see below), but Nāgārjuna had nothing further to say about it²⁵. On the contrary, instead of discussing the two *nirvāṇadhātus*, he maintains that Nirvāṇa is *aprahīṇa*, *asamprāpta*, *anucchinna*, *aśāśvata*, *aniruddha*, *anutpanna*, i.e., neither this nor that. This paradoxical neither-this-nor-that 'conception' of Nirvāṇa is most characteristic of Nāgārjuna and, in a way, a *testimonium desperationis*. Again and again, almost *ad nauseam*, he tells us that Nirvāṇa is neither *bhāva* nor *abhāva*, it is just a giving up of clinging to any notion at all.

It is true that several canonical passages speak of Nirvāṇa as unborn, uncreated, as a place of escape as opposed to *Samsāra*.

23 See my *Nagarjuniana. Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna*, Copenhagen 1982, p.256.

24 The term is very rare and old as an epithet of Nirvāṇa; see CPD, s.v. *a-moṣa-dhamma*. The early Buddhists themselves must have been in doubt about its original meaning. It can either be taken in the sense of elusive, or delusive. Cf. Nāgārjuna's MK XIII 1.

25 See La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa*, Paris 1925.

With Nāgārjuna it is otherwise. He stresses the *paradoxical* nature of Nirvāṇa, it is neither this nor that and, therefore, it cannot even be said to be different from Saṃsāra — or identical with it, for that matter. This is by no means an old canonical view, though one may argue that it has its roots in the Canon, but only in an indirect way.

How, then, did Nāgārjuna arrive at the view that Nirvāṇa should be expressed as a paradox? As we know, his 'philosophical' writings were composed in the spirit of various Mahāyāna sūtras, in particular the Prajñāpāramitā.²⁶ Most characteristic of this huge mass of religious literature is the neither-nor, or paradoxical *reaction* to traditional Abhidharma concepts. As opposed to the 'realistic' spirit of Abhidharma (esp. Sarvāstivāda), Prajñāpāramitā compares everything, including Nirvāṇa, to dreams and illusions, etc. And, in my opinion, Nāgārjuna was also deeply influenced by the Laṅkāvatārasūtra, which deals with Nirvāṇa in a similar fashion.²⁷

Why then did Nāgārjuna and the Mahāyāna tradition advocate a *māyāvāda* which certainly had little or no support in the ancient canonical scriptures? In reply to this question scholars usually suggest that the early Mahāyānists were 'mystics'. No doubt, but then the earlier Buddhists were also 'mystics'! The correct answer, or at least a part of it, I think, is surprisingly simplistic: the contradictory nature of the canonical statements about Nirvāṇa actually *forced* the early Mahāyānists, who were first

26 For a fine guide to this extensive literature, see E. Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature*, Tokyo 1978.

27 See my paper 'The Laṅkāvatārasūtra in Early Indian Madhyamaka Literature', *Études Asiatiques* XLVI (1992) — *Festschrift* for Jacques May, pp.244–79.

and last *interpreters* of the Canon (as opposed to the Abhidharmikas who were more constructive in their way of dealing with their Canons) to come up with a paradoxical interpretation of the absolute. Not just early Mādhyamika, but also early Yogācāra (with its absolutist interpretation of *viññāna*) may have evolved in that way. What I am saying, in other words, is that *māyāvāda*, so characteristic of the Prajñāpāramitā and Mādhyamika, did not necessarily develop as a result of new and deep insights into the nature of the world, but rather as a result of being confronted with incompatibilities in the canonical books combined with an innate tendency to react against the dry spirit of Abhidharma. Early Mahāyāna *māyāvāda*, in a word, was largely the result of creative exegesis.

No single passage in the old Canon led to such an outburst of exegetical skill on the part of Nāgārjuna as Dīgha Nikāya I 223, to which I have already referred above. It runs:

*viññāṇam anidassanam anantaṃ sabbato-paḥham
ettha āpo ca paṭhavī tejo vāyo na gādhati
ettha dīghaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca añum thulam subhāsubham
ettha nāmaṇ ca rūpaṇ ca asesam uparujjhati
viññāṇassa nirodhena etth' etam uparujjhati tī*²⁸.

28 See my *Nagarjuniana*, p.256–7. See also E. Frauwallner, *Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden 1982, p.85; Rune E.A. Johansson, *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism*, Oxford 1979, p.63; K. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p.54; K.R. Norman, 'An Epithet of Nibbāna', in N.H. Samtani (ed.), *Śramaṇa Vidyā: Studies in Buddhism*, Sarnath, Varanasi 1987, pp.23–31. (When Mr Norman has me claim (p.31) that Nāgārjuna is referring to the Pāli version of the Dīgha Nikāya, this is a mistake, for as I said in a note on p.251 of my *Nagarjuniana*, 'In the majority of cases I refer to the Pāli canon as it is the most convenient to consult (Nāgārjuna, of course, used a Sanskrit version).') — In spite of Tib. *kun tu bdag pa*, I would assume that Nāgārjuna used a word meaning 'lucid in every respect', or the like.

Nāgārjuna tries hard to interpret this passage in several of his works. Let us first take a look at Yuktīṣaṭikā 34:

*mahābhūta divijñāne proktaṃ samavarudhyate /
tajjñāne vīgamam yāti nanu mūhyā vikalpitam //*²⁹

The verse tell us that the elements, etc., are products of false imagination. A most uncanonical idea! They disappear in *viññāna* when recognized as unreal. The following passage, i.e. v.35, alluding to such textual sources as Majjhima Nikāya III 245, informs us that only Nirvāṇa is true. The rest is false. Thus Nāgārjuna here understands *viññāna* as an approximate synonym of Nirvāṇa (incidentally, Buddhaghosa does the same in his commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya³⁰). But at the same time *viññāna* is the locus of *false* imagination! And so he cannot avoid what one might call the classical Indian dilemma, viz. that the absolute is not only the source of the highest cognition but also of the darkest ignorance. Thus Nāgārjuna's interpretation ends in a paradox.

In Ratnāvalī I 78-II 2, Nāgārjuna devotes a long passage to a discussion of the same canonical verses³¹. This time, however, he deals with them in the light of the 'Śaddhātusūtra'. His argument is this: no soul (*puruṣa*) exists since no *puruṣa* is to be found in the elements taken together or taken separately. Moreover, the six elements, being mutually dependent, do not exist in the ultimate sense. And then we find, again, our old passage (I 93-94): Earth, water, fire and wind, etc., have been stated by the Buddha

29 *Nagarjuniana*, pp.110-13 for these two verses.

30 K. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p.54. Buddhaghosa is also forced to speak of two kinds of Nirvāṇa!

31 The text is edited by M. Hahn, *Nāgārjuna's Ratnāvalī*, Bonn 1982. Hahn also gives references to various modern translations, etc. — For the Śaddhātusūtra see n.11.

to cease in *viññāna*, which is described as *anidarśana*, *ananta* and *kun tu bdaḡ po*, 'omnipotent'. The manifold world, Nāgārjuna continues, has been created by ignorance, but it is consumed by the fire of *viññāna*. It is in this sense that the elements, etc., disappear in *viññāna*, i.e., in true discrimination (*tattvārthanirṇaye*). Nevertheless, we learn to our surprise, *viññāna* is as unreal as everything else. — Hence, Nāgārjuna ends up with his old paradox again.

To sum up so far: *viññāna* is the true discrimination tantamount to Nirvāṇa, but nevertheless empty of independent existence. Therefore Nirvāṇa, *viññāna* and ignorance become virtual synonyms. Nāgārjuna ends up with his back against the wall.

One may say that Nāgārjuna in no way wants to endorse any absolutist interpretation of *viññāna*, or even of Nirvāṇa. Likewise his interpretation of the Śaddhātusūtra. Instead of saying, with the sūtra, that a human being actually consists of six elements, Nāgārjuna employs this fact to the opposite purpose, namely to prove that there is no soul or human personality, but *only* six elements. And he goes even further: the six elements are also empty. This is, in fact, a very personal and characteristic interpretation of the ancient sūtra.

Now we can also hear and identify a canonical echo in another celebrated passage in Nāgārjuna's main work, MK XVIII 5:

*karmakleśakṣayān mokṣaḥ karmakleśā vikalpataḥ /
te prapañcāt prapañcas tu śūnyatāyām nirudhyate //*³²

Here Nāgārjuna is using another terminology, but we are not in

32 See Chr. Lindtner (ed.), *Nāgārjunas filosofiske Værker*, Copenhagen 1982, pp.177-215, for an edition of the Sanskrit text of the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā.

doubt that *prapañca* corresponds to *mahābhūtādi*, and that *śūnya-tāyām* corresponds semantically (and grammatically) to *viññāne/tajjñāne* in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* 34 (quoted above), as well as to *tat-tvārthanirṇate* in *Ratnāvalī* I 99b. So even in his *magnum opus* Nāgārjuna is haunted by the old Dīgha Nikāya verses.

The final passage of interest to us here is *Lokātītastava* 26-27. Here it is said that *viññāna* must become *animitta*, signless, before one can achieve final liberation, *mokṣa*. Taken in themselves these verses are somewhat puzzling and not sufficiently explicit, but now they are easily understood in the light of the above parallels³³.

We can now sum up Nāgārjuna's conception of Nirvāṇa and *viññāna*. It is basically paradoxical and a result of creative exegesis. There is certainly no such thing as an absolute, independent *viññāna*, not even if the term is occasionally used as a synonym for Nirvāṇa, or true cognition. In his interpretation of Dīgha Nikāya I 223, he obviates those adherents of *Vijñānavāda* (this is the term used in *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* 26) who would assign some independent and fundamental Upaniṣadic status to *viññāna*³⁴. When it comes to Nirvāṇa, this is basically a paradox, and the paradox does not diminish when Nāgārjuna 'defines' it as the cessation of passions and rebirth. Nāgārjuna, again, in no way agrees with those Buddhists who would consider Nirvāṇa as literally a place (*pada*, *sthāna*, *āyatana*, *dhātu*, etc.) to which one can go — as one can go to heaven or hell to be reborn there. In other words, speaking of *viññāna* and Nirvāṇa in Nāgārjuna, we are confronted with what Louis de La Vallée Poussin once called

'a poor ontology'³⁵. Nāgārjuna was very well aware of the possibility of interpreting the canonical *dicta* about Nirvāṇa and *viññāna* in a substantialist fashion, but he himself took great pains to refute and abandon such attempts.

When it comes to the concept of a soul, we may finally add, one sees the same tendency at work in Nāgārjuna: several chapters in his *magnum opus* are devoted to a refutation of *Pudgalavāda* which believed in the absolute existence of a soul about which, however, one could not speak. For Nāgārjuna all such attempts fall into the huge and empty basket of *śūnyatā*.

Let me briefly repeat my hypothesis before I conclude. The Pāli Canon shows several clear traces of precanonical Buddhism. This kind of early Buddhism was based on a belief in the six *dhātus* and was thus a kind of natural philosophy. At the peak of existence (*bhūtakoṭi*) we found Nirvāṇa. Like the spirit, which may have stopped breathing there, it was considered permanent and blissful, but one had to pass through *ākāśa* and *viññāna* to get there. One could not actually attain it by some sort of yogic method. It was a yogi's paradise, hardly a place for the common herd. The world of senses was considered impermanent and full of suffering.

Canonical Buddhism, on the other hand, was a reaction to this view. Now everything was considered impermanent. Nirvāṇa was now rather a state of mind, not a place at the top of the universe. Not only was canonical Buddhism a reaction against early Buddhism, or certain trends in early Buddhism, but also against the absolutist tendencies in Jainism and the Upaniṣads.

33 *Nagarjuniana*, pp.136-9. See also *Therīgāthā* 105.

34 See my paper referred to in n.27.

35 La Vallée Poussin, 'Réflexions sur le Madhyamaka', *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* II, 1933.

Early Mahāyāna found itself in a dilemma. It could accept neither the precanonical nor canonical view of man and the world. This dilemma to some extent accounts for the paradoxical nature of the absolute in Mahāyāna, Mādhyamika as well as Yogācāra. The Ratnagotra tradition may well reflect some of the earlier views.

If this rough hypothesis is correct, it implies that we are entitled to take a fresh look at some of the doctrines in Buddhism usually considered anything but orthodox.

To round off this paper I shall permit myself to discuss a few technical terms which have always been considered rather problematic. They may well be looked upon as pieces of wreckage from the oldest conception of Nirvāṇa as a place somewhere to be reached by some sort of yogic journey.

One of the terms I have in mind is *apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa*³⁶. As the late Étienne Lamotte once remarked, a grammatical explanation of this compound would be difficult³⁷. Several translations have been suggested, among these 'not attached to', 'not clinging to', 'not abiding' and not 'clinging'. However, the meaning and the context remain obscure, just as the compound remains odd. I would instead suggest that the term was coined as opposed to **pratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa*, a term *not* found in the extant texts but clearly akin to *acyutapada*, reflecting the old notion of Nirvāṇa as a firm and secure place beyond Samsāra. The compound *apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa* would then not only be easy to explain grammatically (as *acyutapada*) but also semantically. Later on, in Mahāyāna, when the notion of Nirvāṇa as a place was given up,

36 See G.M. Nagao in L.S. Kawamura (ed.), *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*, Waterloo, Ont., 1987, pp.61-79, for a recent study of this term.

37 *Ib.* p.63

the term *apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa* was coined to indicate the new idea of Nirvāṇa as not being bound to a particular location. In general, it will be admitted that it is hard to assume that one began with a negative idea without an earlier assumption of a corresponding positive one.

Another interesting perspective is suggested by the well-known terms *sopadhiśeṣo-* and *nirupadhiśeṣo nirvāṇadhātu*³⁸. One kind of Nirvāṇa still has a remainder of *upadhi*, another does not. In the Canon (and later) the term as a rule means Nirvāṇa with or without a remainder of worldly existence, i.e., with or without the five *skandhas*. So, to begin with, *upadhi* seems to indicate the specific individual (as opposed to something unlimited beyond the individual), later specified as the five *skandhas*. One of the old terms in the Canon is, as known, *nāmarūpa*, a compound, being the 'soul' and the body conceived as an individual living being. This compound occurs in various contexts often associated with *viññāna*. As we have already mentioned above, in precanonical Buddhism *viññāna* was conceived in a way that came close to conceptions in the oldest Upaniṣads, where Brahman was understood as 'a mass of *viññāna*'³⁹. In Vedānta we find almost identical ideas expressed in almost identical language. The manifestation of *nāmarūpa* is somehow due to Brahman and

38 Cf CPD (s.v. *an-upādi-sesa*, etc.), BHSD (s.v. *nir-upadhi-śeṣa*, etc.), SWTF (s.v. *upa-dhi*, etc.). See also K. Bhattacharya, 'Upadhi-, upādi- et upādāna dans le Canon bouddhique pâli' in *Mélanges d'Indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou*, Paris 1968, pp.81-96; and L. Schmithausen, *Der Nirvāṇa-Abschnitt in der Vinīścayasamgrahāṇī der Yogācārabhūmi*, Vienna 1969, *passim*. There are some morphological problems, but semantically *upādi*, *upadhi*, *upādhi*, etc., are closely related.

39 See E. Frauwallner, *op. cit.*, pp.95-139, for Brahman as *viññāna*, *viññānaghana*, etc.

avidyā. The *upadhis*, the individual bodies and souls, are created by, or even identical with *nāmarūpa*⁴⁰. I do not see how there can be any doubt that these speculations known from later Vedāntic sources ultimately have the same origin as the ideas we find in certain parts of the Buddhist Canon. The hypothesis of precanonical Buddhism explains the striking similarities in a most attractive way.

This means, then, that we get this rough picture of the development that took place. Early Buddhism accepted some sort of absolute the nature of which was *viññāna*, spirit. Unlike the Upaniṣads, the term used for this was not Brahman, instead the term *Nirvāṇa* was coined⁴¹. For the manifest world of individuals the term *nāmarūpa* was, to begin with, also used by the Buddha (or the early Buddhists). Later on, the term was replaced by the five *skandhas*, a specific Buddhist notion. For the existential basis of the individual (first *nāmarūpa*, later the five *skandhas*) the term *upadhi* was used, not only in Vedānta (early as well as late), but also by the Bauddhas and Jains. At some point the notion of *Nirvāṇa* changed, and the idea of the absolute as a place (as we have seen) was abandoned. Hence a new concept had to be introduced describing *nirvāṇadhātu*, viz. *sopadhiśeṣa*-, when defining this as a mere freedom from passions, a state of mind, attainable in this life. At the same time the opposite term *nirupadhiśeṣo nirvāṇadhātu* was created to indicate final release from the five *skandhas* constituting the existential basis of the individual (the term *upādānaskandha* being used to indicate this state).

40 See Paul Hacker, *Kleine Schriften*, Wiesbaden 1978, p.88, *et passim*.

41 This would perhaps explain the term *brahmanirvāṇa* not found in the Pāli Canon and perhaps coined by the author of the *Gītā*. See R.C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā*, Oxford 1969, p.159.

I hope, with these few examples, to have shown that the hypothesis of precanonical Buddhism, or at least a method that distinguishes between various layers ('strata') or stages of development in the canonical writings, in some cases permit us to achieve a better understanding of some otherwise obscure ideas in early Buddhism.

POSTSCRIPTUM (May 1997)

This paper was first presented in a public lecture at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, October 1990, and subsequently published in the book *Philosophical Problems in the Religions of the East* (= *Studia religiologica*, fasc. xxvi, Uniwersytet Jagielloński) Cracow 1993, pp.10-22. Since then, I have had occasion to ponder some of the problems concerning early and precanonical Buddhism, and, since this has led me to some conclusions that may not be unimportant, it seems reasonable that I should here draw the reader's attention to these. I have given full references to the original sources on which I base my new observations in a forthcoming paper entitled 'From Brahmanism to Buddhism'. It is scheduled to appear soon in the *Festschrift* for the Russian Indologist, Prof. G.M. Bongard-Levin, under the editorship of A.A. Vigasin.

It is of the utmost importance, when we study the earliest canonical scriptures of the Buddhists (mainly transmitted in the Pāli language), that we make a sharp distinction between the historical Gautama and the later mythical Buddha, who was considered a Bhagavat by his followers. When the old traditions about the man and his teachings were eventually given the canonical form(s) now transmitted to us, numerous historical facts had either been forgotten or transformed into myths. (There is a close parallel to this development in the West: the historical Jesus

(one or more of that common name) is transformed into the mythical Christ — with the extremely absurd consequence that we now, without giving it much critical thought, speak of Jesus Christ, as if the two had ever been one!) When the anonymous Buddhist redactors and patriarchs responsible for the hoax decided to apotheosize the 'enlightened' Gautama into a divine Bhagavat, they, in principle, did exactly the same thing that numerous other Indian devotees of other historical heroes did — they imposed an old religious stereotype upon their historical teacher. They made myth out of history. The same mythopoetic endeavours explain why other historical religious teachers were eventually apotheosized as Kṛṣṇa Bhagavat, Mahāvīra Bhagavat, etc., etc. This mythology was certainly good for the spread of religion, but from the point of view of historical research, it was a misfortune.

Invariably, such a Bhagavat has two bodies, a physical and a spiritual, a mortal and an immortal. In his mortal physical body he serves as a great teacher, and the basis of his teaching is his spiritual body. As a great teacher, a Bhagavat quite naturally deserves the *bhakti* — the devotion — of his followers. Furthermore, the teaching of a Bhagavat is always a teaching about Dharma. Invariably, a Bhagavat's Dharma has two aspects — a practical and a theoretical. A Bhagavat teaches his devotees how to live and how to understand. The sole purpose of his doing so is that the devotees should imitate him and eventually become like him. The Dharma that a Bhagavat teaches is never something he himself has *invented*. It is a body of physical and spiritual laws that he claims to have *discovered* through his own efforts — through yoga. And, therefore, our sources also speak of a double yoga in the same sense as they speak of a double Dharma.

A Bhagavat, in other words, by definition teaches his followers a moral and intellectual method whereby the individual eventually can become absorbed in 'the absolute' — the One. It is

now perfectly, not to say embarrassingly, understandable why this simple state of affairs — speaking of Buddhism, Jainism, Kṛṣṇaism and other forms of Bhagavat religious movements — has not been clearly recognized by historians before. The fact that these Bhagavat movements were *rival* movements brought in an element of natural competition for survival that forced them to develop their own specific technical terminology. This was absolutely necessary if the various movements — based on different individual historical teachers of yoga — were to survive and maintain their identity. (Again, it may be helpful to recall parallels in the development of different Christian sects and churches in the West.) It is precisely because fundamentally they have so much in common that the different Bhagavat movements in India have to emphasize their minor individual differences. This is the key to survival, not just in matters of the spirit but, of course — and perhaps even more so — in the biological life of the human species. In the competition and struggle for survival, minor variants make major differences.

In short, when we study ancient Buddhism we should always do so with an eye on parallel developments in the other Bhagavat movements in ancient India. Such a thing as 'Buddhist studies' isolated from the broader context of Indian philosophy is, therefore, bound to be an extremely hazardous affair.

The idea of the two bodies of a Bhagavat can be traced back to the Upaniṣadic notion of the two forms of Brahman. According to the old Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II 2.1, 'There are, surely, two forms of Brahman, the formed (corporeal, physical) and the unformed, the mortal and the immortal'. In its highest, unmanifest form Brahman is, in some sources, pure spirit (*viññāna*). It manifests itself, due to ignorance, desire, etc., as the (unreal) individual *ātman* but ultimately, of course, the individual is not really different from the 'absolute' Brahman. Once we keep

such old passages in mind, it should come as no surprise to us when we read that Buddha, Kṛṣṇa, Mahāvīra and any other Bhagavat are also said to 'have become Brahman', to teach a path that leads to Brahman, to lead a life of Brahman, etc. Bhagavatism, then, is reformed Brahmanism. In Bhagavatism the emphasis, naturally, is not on Vedic authority, not on traditional rituals, not on a creator of the world, and certainly not on animal sacrifice — but on the authority of the divine Bhagavat — a man who has become god by practising the double Dharma, the two kinds of yoga necessary for bringing about that purification that brings the empirical *ātman* back to the unmanifest Brahman.

Already in the philosophical hymns of the Rgveda we find speculations about the relationship between the One and the manifest world (see, above all, Paul Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*. Erster Band, Erste Abteilung, Leipzig 1920, for a good discussion of all the relevant sources). For centuries before the time of the Buddha, Indian sages had asked themselves how the One manifested itself — for what reason and in which form, etc. Often the reply would be in anthropomorphic terms. The unmanifest One had become a manifold individual due to desire, or so it would seem as long as we are in a state of ignorance. Does the One exist, or does it not exist? The Indian philosophers were thus thinking in much the same terms as were the Greek philosophers before and after Socrates — the first Greek philosopher (if I am not mistaken) to start thinking in terms of man as responsible for his own actions — the Greek counterpart to the Indian notion of Dharma.

It is in this context that the historical Buddha, Gautama, belonged. As a young man he must have been introduced to the old Vedic speculations. The world of the Upaniṣads cannot have been unknown to him. Eventually, he discovered a new path to Brahman. He expressed himself in terms of *satya* and *dharma* —

two closely related concepts already in the earliest Upaniṣads. In this there was nothing really new. No philosopher, no creative thinker, starts from scratch. It is for this reason, I suggest, that we find several 'precanonical' passages surviving in the canonical scriptures. They reflect Gautama's earlier speculations before he finally came forth with his own independent ideas — new ideas that quite naturally rendered the former ones more or less obsolete, or perhaps useful in new contexts.

There were many speculations about the nature of the *ātman* — the microcosm as empirically opposed to the macrocosm (— to use the convenient terminology probably first coined by Democritus of Abdera). The Buddhists expressed this by making a distinction between *dharmadhātu* and *sattvadhātu*, Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra, etc. After Yājñavalkya it is hard to see how any serious thinker could maintain that the *ātman* — which is Brahman — is an entity that could be 'grasped' as any other empirical object. It is so real that it cannot be expressed in terms of 'is or is not', i.e. the idea is that (the 'cognition' of) ultimate reality is beyond being (is) and non-being (is not). See on all this the important book by Hans P. Sturm, *Weder Sein noch Nichtsein. Der Urteilsvierkant (catuṣkoṭi) und seine Korollarien im östlichen und westlichen Denken*, Würzburg 1996. On the other hand, one could certainly not deny the presence of the individual person. Before the time of the Buddha the individual person — the *puruṣa* — had been described variously in terms of name-form, and as consisting of six elements. With these ideas the Buddha was familiar, and for this reason we find statements — *logia* — in the scriptures where it says that man consists of six elements — the four material elements, *viññāna* and space. These were old and familiar ideas, and to some extent quite true to fact. But the Buddha went further. Eventually he developed his own independent description of the individual in terms of the five

skandhas. This description did not entirely replace the older categories of six elements, twelve bases, name-form, etc., but it served to distinguish the Buddha as an original observer of man.

Also original was his notion about *pratītyasamutpāda*. It was his personal reply to the question: how does suffering, *duḥkha*, come about? When he spoke about *duḥkha*, he spoke about the five *skandhas*, i.e., about the individual. The term, therefore, means: this sad state of being an individual — a microcosm as opposed to a macrocosm. He then offered a causal explanation of the evolution of the individual. The individual comes about as a result of various causes and conditions, at the root of which we find — as already observed by former sages — desire and ignorance. There were others before the Buddha who had speculated about causality and the genesis of suffering, but his was certainly a brave (if still primitive and obscure) attempt at a 'scientific' explanation of the causal relationship between microcosm and macrocosm. As we would expect, it is still an unspoken presupposition of his way of thinking that the 'two forms of Brahman' are ultimately the same, and it is, therefore, not surprising that *pratītyasamutpāda* assumes a cyclic causality. There is really no first and no final term — only from a 'psychological' point of view. This is a kind of 'monism' that — in spite of the originality of its creator — in no way breaks with traditional Brahmanism.

The outlines of the picture we as historians must reconstruct, then, are these. Gautama was a learned scholar familiar with Vedic lore and with the many speculations flourishing outside orthodox circles. As a thinker his most original contribution found expression in the new theories about the individual and causality — the five *skandhas* and the *pratītyasamutpāda*. He must also have impressed his students as a great teacher capable of formulating old ideas in a new and convincing fashion. When

he passed away they cherished his memory. But there were other great teachers with many loyal students. This meant competition, rivalry and a fierce struggle for influence, dominance and individual survival as a group. History was eclipsed and falsified by myths. The most successful and popular of all myths (later on even in the West) was that of a Bhagavat — a man who was also a god — the personification of Brahman, it- and himself. The devotees of Mahāvira and of Kṛṣṇa — later on of Śiva also — did the same thing (— the technical term is *lokapakti* — appeal to the masses, religious propaganda). A Bhagavat has much more popular appeal than Brahman. A Bhagavat was a human god to whom one could express love and from whom one could hope for salvation. Not so the impersonal Brahman — or the somewhat hilarious Brahma, the *opifex mundi*.

Still, the distinction between the 'enlightened' Gautama and Buddha as a Bhagavat is not in itself sufficient — though necessary — to provide an instrument allowing us to sift out what is original and what is mythical in the canonical scriptures. It is quite possible that these texts contain many passages and ideas that bear the stamp of originality. But how can we determine whose originality we may here be dealing with? It would not surprise us if talented Buddhist scholars later on introduced their own — apocryphal — ideas into the scriptures — all for the greater glory of their largely mythical founder. It is only by constantly placing new Buddhist concepts in a broader Indological context that we, as historians, shall be able to trace the true course of ancient developments.

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CORRECTIONS TO BSR 14, 1 (1997)

Table of Contents (inside front cover): the title of A. Bareau's article should read: 'Devadatta and the First Buddhist Schism'

page 35, 3 lines from end, for 'seemd' read 'seemed'

page 37, 3 lines from end of text, read 'Marsala 1989-90'

page 88, 3 lines from end, for 'summarisd' read 'summarised'

* * *

DEVADATTA (BSR 14, 1, 1997)

The Editor is indebted to Eric Fallick (Arlington, VA) for drawing his attention to Reginald A. Ray's *Buddhist Saints in India* (OUP, 1994), which devotes almost a chapter to Devadatta (pp.162-78) — and indirectly to the following entries in the Bibliography: A.M. Hocart, 'Buddha and Devadatta' (*The Indian Antiquary* 52, pp.267-72), T. Sugimoto, 'A Re-evaluation of Devadatta: the Salvation of Evil Men in Buddhism' (*Ronshu: Studies in Religions East and West* 9, 1982, pp.360-76), and E. Waldschmidt, 'Reste von Devadatta-Episoden aus dem Vinaya der Sarvāstivādins' (*ZDMG* 119, 1964, pp.552-8). See also Jotiya Dhirasekera, 'Devadatta' in *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* IV, 3, (1988), pp.418-21.

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THE STUDY OF BUDDHISM: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

David Scott

Buddhism presents particularly distinctive challenges for students of religion. In many ways it seems to be very untypical of what in the West has often traditionally been taken as inherent features of religion. God, a soul, even concepts like Heaven and Hell are either absent or just not particularly central. Consequently, Buddhism has in the past been talked about by Westerners as being a philosophy, applied psychology, an ethical system, almost anything but a religion! Three broad areas present stimulating challenges. Firstly, the very concept of the term religion can be explored to see if its common usage in the West is perhaps too restrictive. Secondly, we can explore the concerns and characteristics of Buddhism a little more closely and see if calling it a philosophy, applied psychology or ethical conduct is also a restriction of what is involved in Buddhism. Thirdly, we can look at the wider context for Buddhism, be it towards other religions or new Western and global settings.

One general proviso must be made for the study of Buddhism. This can be described as the 'insider-outsider' situation. Most students of Buddhism, particularly in the West, are not operating within a Buddhist setting. This 'outsider' status can give some advantages in terms of detachment and lack of sectarianism. However, it can also blunt sensitivity to the internal dynamics of Buddhist practices and can lead to the danger of reading non-Buddhist assumptions into an analysis of Buddhism. A related point arises from D'Costa's recent consideration of 'objective truth

criteria' in the inter-faith debate¹. He suggests that theoretical total academic neutrality is virtually impossible, since existing faith and belief (or its lack) inevitably impinge on considerations of religious claims. Such comments do not negate the value of academic study and evaluation of religion, but they do indicate inherent limitations.

(1) NUANCES IN THE TERM 'RELIGION'

A telling reminder of this issue comes from Herbrechtsmeir's article 'Buddhism and the definition of religion' which has the subtitle 'one more time', and where he argues for a more flexible 'inclusive' consideration of what the term should cover². Such a subtitle indicates previous controversies and challenges posed to the term 'religion' when Buddhism is considered.

A useful starting point is the Dominican theologian Dubarle's comment that 'Buddhism is not really a religion in the Western meaning of the term'³. However, that same *Concilium* collection of essays has Corless' comments:

Buddhism is clearly a soteriological religion: it states that the human condition is unsatisfactory, it points to a trans-human state which is satisfactory and it indicates the path from one to the other. It is what William James called a 'twice-born'

1 G. D'Costa, 'Whose objectivity, which neutrality? The doomed quest for a neutral vantage point from which to judge religions', *Religious Studies* 29, 1993, pp.79-96.

2 G. Herbrechtsmeir, 'Buddhism and the definition of religion: one more time', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religions* 32, W. Lafayette, USA, 1993, pp. 1-18, where he sees traditional theistic frameworks ('superhuman beings') as being too narrow in the light of Buddhism.

3 D. Dubarle, 'Buddhist Spirituality and the Christian Understanding of God', in C. Geffre and M. Dhavamony, *Buddhism and Christianity* (= *Concilium* 116), New York 1979, repr. 1986, pp.64-73, p.64.

religion — the individual must die to himself and be reborn a new creature — and as such it is directly in sympathy with Orthodox and Catholic Christianity, and with most forms of Protestant Christianity⁴.

Both statements are true enough and are worth considering more closely. Dubarle's comment reflects a common usage of the term 'religion', expecting particular theistic frameworks within which salvation of the individual can operate and find expression. When we encounter Buddhist doctrines we find that traditional deities, particularly in the sense of a theistic creatorial saviour-type figure, is at best not very central to the Buddhist quest and at worst is an erroneous example of clouded views. Assumptions about 'individual' salvation, and with it responses to deities, are further brought into fundamental question in Buddhism, since one of its underpinning concepts is *anātman*, roughly translated as 'no-soul'. But then, as Dubarle himself noted in his comment, such a theistic framework does have Western-type religious assumptions.

In reality religion has a wider meaning. One useful approach is to go back to linguistic roots. The Latin word *religio* has the sense of link, obligation, bond and reverence. Religion can then be said to be that which joins and links. Partly this operates at the social or community level, but also in a more metaphysical sense. This in turn can be tied into the sense of unity and integration that religion down the ages has claimed to offer, in which respect the Christian term atonement still retains strands of this religious drive to provide an at-one-ment. In traditional Buddhist terms, insight and peace.

4 R. Corless, 'A Christian perspective on Buddhist liberation', in Geffre and Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p.75

Within such a setting, we have theologians like Tillich (*Dynamics of Faith*) coining his well known dictum that religious faith is 'the state of being ultimately concerned'. Buddhism would certainly feel its quest to be one involving ultimate 'concerns'. In a formal philosophical setting, Weibe holds that:

Religion is that central human reality in which individuals and groups try to master what they judge to be the one profound ill of life on earth by confronting this ill with a good equally profound⁵.

This has overtones of a diagnosis, which as we shall see fits quite closely the diagnostic tone of the Buddhist Four Noble Truths. In Buddhism a profound illness is identified (*trṣṇā*, clinging, craving, desire), able to be remedied and overcome through the profoundly good Noble Eightfold Path. Melford Spiro brings up social nuances of religion being 'an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings⁶. The useful thing with Spiro's stance is his picking up of the rôle of cultural patterns in religious expression, even if 'superhuman beings' would need to be clarified in a Buddhist setting. In this connection evaluation of how far Buddhism has benefited or been subtly distorted through strong monastic institutional development is an issue for any study of Buddhism, as it was between Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. If we look at fundamental religious experience then we have Otto's seminal formulation (*The Idea of the Holy*) of that basic religious sense of the *numinous*, that which is simultaneously awesome (*mysterium*), dread filling (*tremendum*) yet compellingly attracting (*fascinas*). Bud-

5 P. Wiebe, *The Architecture of Religion*, London 1964, p.32.

6 In M. Banton, ed., *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, London 1968, p.96.

dhism, while not being a Western style theistic-centred tradition, fits Otto's central thrust.

Central one-line definitions perhaps anyway run the danger of being either too vague or in being too restricted to certain types of religion. One could though take the practical fact of 'religions' being actual concrete phenomena that are encountered in the world. Faced with such tangible phenomena, one can then look at what they involve as phenomena. This alters the emphasis of how one can approach religion generally and, indeed, specific traditions such as Buddhism in our case. Ninian Smart has been a particularly influential scholar within this 'phenomenological' approach, 'religions as they are in real life'. His comparative studies over some time led him to draw up a schemata of religions having, or involving, certain types of activities, what he calls 'dimensions'. The balance between these 'dimensions' may vary between religions, across time, and for individuals, but they can be discerned across religions. When we look at his doctrinal, sacred narrative, ritual, ethical, visual, social-institutional, and experiential dimensions, we find that Buddhism can be clearly fitted into all of these seven 'dimensions' categories⁷.

To recap, the comments by Dubarle are accurate enough, but limited. Conceptually there is more to the term religion than is met just within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This is where Corless' comments, cited earlier, are helpful. Buddhism, though not fitting into certain Western religious frameworks, serves as a reminder of the richness of the term religion.

7 N. Smart, *The Religious Experience*, 4th ed., New York 1991, pp.6-16 for general 'dimensions' rationale. N. Smart and R. Hecht, *Sacred Texts of the World: a Universal Anthology*, London 1982, pp.231-75 for examples of its application to Buddhism.

(2) NUANCES IN THE TERM 'BUDDHISM'

In any study of Buddhism there are the dangers of on the one hand restricting the scope of the term Buddhism (diversity) or, on the other, of missing sight of the central underpinning Buddhist perspectives (unity). Both elements need to be dealt with.

For the sake of argument we could expect Buddhism to have certain central elements within it. A basic starting point would be its focus on the person of the Buddha, who taught around the sixth century BCE in India. In a slightly more formalised setting we have the *Ratanattaya* 'Three Jewels' which have traditionally served for entry into the Buddhist community, i.e. 'To the Buddha for refuge I go; to the Dhamma (Teachings) for refuge I go; to the Sangha (Community, trainees) for refuge I go'. In any analysis of Buddhism, the key issue is exactly what taking 'refuge' *saraṇam* implies, and thus involves. How does this fit with other injunctions concerning refuge found in popular basic texts such as Dhammapada 160 and 276 that: 'One is one's own refuge, who else could be a refuge? . . . You should do your work, for the Tathāgatas only teach the way'⁸.

Each of the elements of the Three Jewels is worthy of full study in its own right. What rôle does the Buddha play, both in an ontological as well as practical (training) sense? If faith (*śraddhā*) is one of the Five Spiritual Faculties fostered in Buddhism, then faith in the Buddha as what, and how does faith

8 This follows Rahula's translation in *What the Buddha Taught*, 2nd ed., Bedford 1967, p.1. Nārada, *The Dhammapada*, London 1954, translates it as 'the self is lord of the self, for what other lord would there be? . . . You yourself must make an effort, the Tathāgatas are only teachers'.

fit into the other Spiritual Faculties?⁹ What exactly are the key Buddhist teachings of Truth? Within the Sangha what are the rôles of the monastic and lay wings, males and females?

One formalised setting for 'defining', or perhaps more accurately indicating the scope and concerns of Buddhism are the 'Twelve Principles of Buddhism' presented by Christmas Humphreys to the Sixth Buddhist Council, Rangoon 1954-56. These are:

1. Self salvation. . . learning by direct and personal experience.
2. The first fact of existence is the law of change or impermanence [*anicca*].
3. The law of change applies equally to the 'soul' [*anatta*].
4. All effects have causes and man's soul-or character is the sum total of his previous thoughts and acts. Karma. . .
5. Life is one and indivisible. . . from an understanding of life's unity arises compassion, a sense of identity with life in other forms.
6. In ignorance. . . wrongly directed energy of selfishness [*taṇhā*] produces suffering. The Buddha taught four Noble Truths.
7. The Eightfold Path. . . as Buddhism is a way of living, not merely a theory of life.
8. A God with attributes is not the final Reality. . .
Nirvāṇa, the extinction of the limitations of self-hood, is attainable on earth, look within.
9. From potential to actual Enlightenment there lies the Middle Way. . . between the 'opposites', avoiding all extremes.

9 E.g. M. Pallis, 'Is there room for "Grace" in Buddhism?', in *idem.*, *A Buddhist Spectrum*, London 1980, pp.52-71.

10. Buddhism lays great stress on inward concentration and meditation.
11. Buddhism knows no authority for truth save the intuition of the individual. . . the utmost tolerance is practised towards all other religions.
12. It appeals to the West because it has no dogma, satisfies reason and the heart¹⁰.

This Declaration can, though, be fruitfully subject to further analysis. How significant are the implications of the involvement of Christmas Humphreys in the drawing up of the Declaration, given his position as the leading light in the (London) Buddhist Society, rather than as a formal Theravāda participant?

With or without such conscious Buddhist stances, we should be on the lookout for a marked, and at first sight even confusing, range of strands calling themselves Buddhist. The whole Mahāyāna-Theravāda diversity also questions 'authenticity'. On the one hand the earliest Mahāyāna Prajñāpāramitā sūtras seem to have been crystallising by the first century BCE. On the other hand the Theravāda Pāli Canon, though claiming to be the earliest and full record of the Buddha's teachings, was itself only committed to writing in first century BCE Sri Lanka, having been orally transmitted in the previous centuries. This length of oral transmission is one reason why the 'quest for the historical Buddha' remains a lively study area, as do the Mahāyāna or Theravāda claims over

10 Text contained in C. Humphreys, *Buddhism*, Harmondsworth 1962, pp.74-6. Interestingly with regard to proposition 11, Humphreys says despite fears of 'great difficulty', he obtained the agreement of the Pure Land Japanese leaders (from the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto), at a convention of seventeen 'principal Buddhist Sects'. He also talks about 'representatives of the Buddhists in Tibet' approving them.

respective priority. It also leads into consideration of what the Mahāyāna really means when it talks of their texts being delivered by the Buddha, given their use of the Trikāya 'triple body' of the Buddha concept, and a more 'dynamic' concept perhaps of the rôle of the Buddha/s. Functionalist criteria, discussed later, may be a useful study perspective for pinpointing a common Buddhism.

Buddhist diversity, or perhaps richness, also reflects the situation encountered in any study of religion between what are often dubbed the 'high' and 'popular' expressions of that religion. The 'high' manifestations of the religion tend to be centred on sacred texts and official interpreters and hierarchies who may be saying what the religion should involve. 'Popular' (or 'low', an unfortunate term given its pejorative overtones) religion tends to be very much based on what the religion does actually involve for the bulk of its adherents at the 'grass roots' level, where such matters as rituals and understandings may be taking a distinctive line. In an historical, and conceptually in a phenomenological, sense such popular manifestations are no less a part of that religious tradition than are the more official parts. To equate the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' to being that of 'theory' and 'practice' is too simplistic, but there is an element of it.

A useful contribution in this area has been Southwold's *Buddhism in Life*, with a subtitle *The Anthropological Study of Religion and the Sinhalese Practice of Buddhism*, where he distinguishes between 'practical/empirical/actual' Buddhism, that he observed in rural Sri Lanka, and 'ideal' Buddhism. His thrust, though, is that:

If we seek a criterion of what authentic Buddhism is, it can only be Buddhendom, actual Buddhism, of which village Buddhism is now, and always has been, by far the biggest com-

ponent¹¹.

Here there are obvious parallels with Smart's type of phenomenological approach. A key concern of Southwold is to argue that such village level Buddhism has academic merit in its own right. For:

Nearly everything that has been written about the actual Buddhism of the villages — let us call it 'village Buddhism' for short — is pervaded by the assumption that it is a deviation from, and evidently inferior to, an earlier and truer form of Buddhism which alone is truly authentic¹².

In reasserting the 'authenticity' of rural Buddhism, Southwold goes on to bring out the distinction, both within the bhikkhu Sangha but also the laity, between the paths of ministry and meditation.

Buddhism often shows a dynamic relationship between these sorts of levels. Trevor Ling highlights some of the subtlety in the relationship between these 'high-low' forms of Buddhism within Theravāda circles. At one level he accurately pinpoints the sort of Buddhist writings that have attracted mass interest, not so much the heavy doctrinal pieces, but the popular Jātaka stories and legends of the Buddha's previous lives as a Bodhisatta. Yet Ling goes on to make a further particularly perceptive point:

They cannot be said to form anything more than a threshold to Buddhist belief, but it is a wide threshold and offers plenty of scope for all. . . the important point to notice is that although Buddhism has thus allowed an open frontier between its own Dharma and animistic beliefs, this frontier has always

been firmly controlled from the Buddhist side. . . A Buddhist-inspired remythologizing of popular thought: a recasting and refilling of potent psychological symbols as a result of the stimulus of Buddhist spiritual experience¹³.

For studying Buddhism, we should bear these words carefully in mind (e.g. 'potent psychological symbols', 'Buddhist spiritual experience') when looking at such Jātaka material. Amidst the 'colourful' Jātaka material, a closer study reveals the elements of Buddhist ethics (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*)¹⁴.

Talk of symbolism leads to an appreciation of what Sangharakshita calls 'Visual and Aural Dharma'¹⁵. The whole use of the audio dimension in Theravāda Buddhism is a fertile and important area for study, given the various levels at which *parittā* chanting operates in Theravāda Buddhism. For Harvey:

It is particularly impressive when a group of monks and/or nuns chant, for they use different keys, all blending into a harmonious whole. Chants are usually. . . Pali. . . giving them an added air of sanctity. This, plus their sound quality and accompanying thoughts, generates a mixture of uplifting joy, often felt as a glow of warmth in the chest, and contemplative calm. Such states tend to arise even in those listening to a chant, if they do so with a relaxed but attentive mind. Thus monks and nuns can transmit something of the tranquillity of their way of

11 M. Southwold, *Buddhism in Life. The Anthropological Study of Religion and the Sinhalese Practice of Buddhism*, Manchester 1983, p.5.

12 *ibid.*, p.2.

13 T. Ling, *Buddha, Marx and God*, 2nd ed., London 1979, p.44.

14 Contained in E. Conze, ed., *Buddhist Scriptures*, Harmondsworth 1959, pp.26-30.

15 Sangharakshita, 'Visual and Aural Dharma', in *idem.*, *Alternative Traditions*, Glasgow 1986, pp.159-62; see also N. Levine, *Blessing Power of the Buddhas. Sacred Objects, Secret Lands*, Shaftesbury 1993.

life when chanting for the laity¹⁶.

Here we start to link up to Buddhism's transformative thrust, already suggested by Corless' cited comments. Chanting within Buddhism is a well established feature, being seen in various forms of Zen, Pure Land and Nichiren groups. Tibetan Buddhism also highlights both the audio and visual 'dimensions' of Buddhism through its systematic use of *mantras* and *maṇḍalas*, which formed the centrepiece of the 'Sacred Art of Tibet' exhibition held in London during 1993.

A further aspect to bring into any study of Buddhism is the historical range of schools that have developed down the ages. If we are talking about Buddhism in general we should not just restrict it to any one particular school, if by doing so we restrict our understanding unnecessarily. To take one example, if attempting to ascertain the rôle of the Buddha, or of faith in Buddhism, we would indeed need to deal with Theravāda stances. However, we would also need to bring in Mahāyāna Buddhist perceptions of the Trikāya for the former (Buddha) and Pure Land stances for the latter (faith).

Historical accidents play a rôle here. It was the Theravāda form of Buddhism that was encountered first by British writers, missionaries or academics who tended to be of Protestant formation themselves and thus predisposed to a certain extent towards accepting a similarly restrained ('cooler') Theravāda stance, and which claims to be the original form of Buddhism¹⁷. This would seem to confirm the general reservations suggested by

D'Costa, mentioned at the outset of this article. By contrast, it was mostly Mahāyāna ('Great Vehicle') Buddhism that was encountered in Vietnam and China by French writers, who were themselves coming from a basically Roman Catholic context, with Mahāyāna claims of Buddhist authenticity treated with a degree of sympathy.

In short, in dealing with Buddhism we should bring in the particular Hinayāna-Mahāyāna split, and have regard for the way in which within the Hinayāna ('Small Vehicle') strands only the Theravāda school survived; while within the Mahāyāna schools we have very distinctive Madhyamika, Yogācāra, Pure Land traditions; with the Mahāyāna in turn leading into the Vajrayāna ('Thunderbolt Vehicle', other times called Tantric) developments in Tibet. However, one should be careful not to inject rigid Western ecclesiastical divisions into these internal Buddhist approaches, which frequently show tendencies towards convergence, synthesis and integration between schools.

This overlaps with another distinctive nuance of Buddhism, namely its ability to co-exist in close proximity with other religious traditions, so that we are not always faced with an either/or situation of exclusive religious allegiances in connection with Buddhism. This can be seen particularly strongly in the Far East. Thus in China, Buddhism co-existed in a complementary way with the existing indigenous traditions of Confucianism and Taoism, encapsulated by Chinese religion being compared at times to a cauldron supported by tripod legs of those three religious traditions, to which the Chinese could simultaneously have allegiance. This may have led to some mutual interactions and influences taking place between Buddhism and Taoism in connection with Ch'an Buddhism. A similar situation arose in Japan, where Buddhism and the native Shintō tradition were considered as complementary to each other rather than mutually

16 P. Harvey, *An introduction to Buddhism*, Cambridge 1990, pp.175-6.

17 D. Brear, 'Early assumptions in Western Buddhist studies' *Religion* 5, 1975, pp.136-59; G. Schopen, 'Archaeology and Protestant presuppositions in the study of Indian Buddhism', *History of Religions* 31, 1991, pp.1-23.

exclusive. A modern example of this may be Roger Gregory-Tashi Corless, baptised and confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church, taking refuge with a lama in the Tibetan Gelugpa lineage, founding member and secretary of the 'Society for Christian-Buddhist Studies', and attempting to be a focus for both Christian and Buddhist practice. The inter-faith implications of this will be re-encountered further on in this article.

Another area for consideration is the division sometimes made between world-affirming and world-rejecting religions, i.e. the extent to which this material world is something to be rejoiced in or denounced, something to be infused or something to be fled from. As always there are degrees of religious identification that can be drawn. Judaism, for example, could be said in the main to be very much a world-affirming religious tradition, whereas Manichaeism was very much a classic dualistic world-rejecting religion. Where does Buddhism fit into this sort of spectrum?

One whole area of study is with respect to Buddhism's concern for applied ethics, i.e. involvement in the world. Here the growth of Buddhist environmentalism is an interesting study area, as is the work of social activists like Thich Nhat Hanh — all of which has led Ken Jones both to analyse and practise what he calls 'Engaged Buddhism'¹⁸.

¹⁸ Ken Jones, *The Social Face of Buddhism*. An Approach to Political and Social Activism, London 1989, inc. 'The movement towards a Green libertarian New Age', pp.339–46; *idem.*, *Beyond Optimism*. A Buddhist Political Ecology, Oxford 1993; J. Baird Caldicott and Roger T. Ames, ed., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*. Essays in Environmental Philosophy: IV. The Buddhist World View, New York 1989, pp.213–56; Allan Hunt Badiner, ed., *Dharma Gaia*. A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology, Berkeley 1990; Lambert Schmithausen, *Buddhism and Nature*, 2 vols (Proceedings of an International

In terms of classical Buddhist literature, there certainly are some strong statements that at first sight give Buddhism a very negative seeming stance towards the physical world. Nirvāṇa, the standard Buddhist 'goal', is very graphically described in negative terms in many Pāli texts, for example in Udāna VIII. Likewise, we have other well repeated texts seeming to treat physical matter in a denunciatory fashion, for example the Dhammapada with such verses as: 'How can there be laughter, how can there be pleasure when the whole world is burning? . . . This body is decaying! A nest of diseases, a heap of corruption'¹⁹. The Sati-paṭṭhānasutta has strong visualisations of the bodily organs, subtitled 'Repulsiveness of the Body', which is followed by further visualisations of the body decomposing stage by stage in the cemetery setting. Within the *samatha* 'calm' techniques of Buddhist meditation there are ten *asubha* 'repulsive things' exercises concentrating on disgusting bodily aspects²⁰.

Before leaping to classify Buddhism as a world-rejecting, negative and pessimistic religion we should take into account certain provisos. Buddhism itself rejected Manichaeism, partly on the grounds of safeguarding its own institutional identity, but also by virtue of rejecting Manichaean 'pessimism' towards the created

Symposium on the Occasion of EXPO 1990). Tokyo 1991; I. Harris, 'How environmentalist is Buddhism?', *Religion* 21, 1991, pp.101–14; L. Regenstein, 'Buddhism: Compassion for all creatures', in *idem.*, *Replenish the Earth*, London 1991, pp.233–49; S. Batchelor and K. Brown, ed., *Buddhism and Ecology*, London 1992; Christopher Titmuss, *Green Buddha*, Newton Abbot 1995; D. Scott, 'Buddhist Environmentalism: developing paradigms', *West London Papers in Environmental Studies* 3, 1995, pp.65–77.

¹⁹ Dhammapada 146, 148, tr. in J. Mascaró, *The Dhammapada*, Harmondsworth 1973, pp.56–7, introduction, pp.15–16 for Udāna VIII.

²⁰ See W. King, *Theravada Meditation*, University Park 1980, p.32.

world²¹. Buddhism itself has, after all, always called itself the 'Middle Path' (*majjhimaṭṭipadā*) in order to distinguish itself from the dangerous extremes of either sensual wallowing in this world or severe asceticism fleeing from it. Moreover, there are some passages in the Pāli Canon that describe Nirvāṇa in positive terms, although they are not so frequent²². Other passages in texts such as the Dhammapada have a more measured attitude towards the individual in this world, e.g. v.16, 'He is happy in this world and he is happy in the next world'²³. Conze's comment on doctrinal formulas is worth picking up though: namely that they 'do not, however, aim at terminating controversy but are designed as a rallying point for meditation'²⁴. Sangharakshita has this matter in mind when he develops the distinction he discerns in the Pāli texts between matters of Dharma (Absolute Truth) and matters of Vinaya (i.e. Discipline, Training, effective practice fostering statements), an argument well worth following through in its entirety²⁵.

Sangharakshita may have a good point. Traditionally within Theravāda Buddhism, particular meditation exercises were considered especially appropriate for certain types of attitudes. What better way to avoid clinging to the sensual body than by providing such graphic negative counterbalancing descriptions?

21 See D. Scott, 'Buddhist Responses to Manichaeism', *History of Religions* 35, 2, 1995, pp.148–62.

22 Positive Nirvāṇa descriptions in Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p.36. See also wider range by Peter Skilling, 'The Synonyms of Nirvāṇa according to Prajñāvarman, Vasubandhu and Asaṅga', *Buddhist Studies Review* 11, 1, 1994, pp.29–49.

23 Tr. Mascaró, p.36.

24 Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*, p.181.

25 Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 6th ed., London 1987, pp.144–8.

What better way for conveying the fact of Nirvāṇa not being able to be described by any one term than through the classic *via negativa* language seen at times in all religions to convey the fundamental limitations of language? But if language is limited, experience may not be — which is Sangharakshita's point. Moreover, if we look at Dhammapada 146, 148, with their negative statements noted above, they actually end with more positive teaching points, for example that the body is 'never permanent, for ever changing', with v.154 ending with the exultation that 'the fever of craving is past: for my mortal mind is gone to the joy of immortal Nirvāṇa'²⁶.

This leads to a further feature of Buddhism, its 'functional thrust'²⁷. The distinction between orthodoxy (right beliefs) and orthopraxis (right practice) is a well established one in religious usage. Buddhism indeed has a range of important doctrines. But underneath those doctrines we can also see a degree of inbuilt functional flexibility which lets Buddhism present its message across a wide range of Indian, Hellenic, Iranian, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese cultural settings. In Mahāyāna Buddhism there is the concept of *upāya* 'skilful means', so that the Buddha and his teachings can be understood by different peoples at different levels and even different names, a key concept dealt with by M. Pye (*Skilful Means: a concept in Mahāyāna*) in 1978. Such a theme is developed in full vigour in texts like the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, where the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the personification and embodiment of Compassion, proclaims how 'if there are living beings who wish to fly freely in empty space [Nirvāṇa,

26 Tr. Mascaró, pp.56–7.

27 See D. Scott, 'Buddhist functionalism — Instrumentality reaffirmed', *Asian Philosophy* 5, 2, 1995, pp.127–49.

Śūnyatā 'Void'] I will appear as Maheśvara [the Hindu god Śiva] to teach them the Dharma²⁸. The popular Lotus Sūtra has another Bodhisattva Gadgadaśvara 'Fine Sound' making similar claims. 'This Bodhisattva appears in many kinds of bodies everywhere preaching this sutra. . . sometimes he appears as . . . [the Hindu god] Śakra, or appears as Īśvara or appears as Maheśvara'²⁹. Buddhism, as a religion, may then be better considered as essentially results- rather than beliefs-orientated.

An appreciation of this seems highly appropriate for a study of the important Mahāyāna concept of *śūnyatā* 'emptiness' elaborated by Nāgārjuna. The temptation is to see this as a metaphysical statement of a kind of permanent Ultimate Reality or, at the other extreme, of a kind of nihilism. Paul Ingram, though, shows a commendable sensitivity towards this concept when he questions the interpretation of *śūnyatā* put forward by M. von Bruck. Ingram sees von Bruck's interpretation as reflecting 'uncritically assumed monistic ontology's'³⁰. Ingram's comments, important and perceptive, are that 'the whole point of Nāgārjuna's concept of Emptiness is that all things and events, including all philosophical points of view about things and events, are empty of 'own being' (*svabhāva*). Because all things and events are empty, therefore all things and events are impermanent'³¹. Here Ingram has conceptually, and appropriately, linked Nāgārjuna's

28 *The Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, tr. C. Luk (Lu K'uan Yü), London 1966, p.137.

29 Lotus Sūtra, tr. B. Kato, Y. Tamura and K. Miyasaka, *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, New York 1990, p.316.

30 M. von Bruck, 'Buddhist Shunyata and the Christian Trinity. The emerging holis- tie paradigm', in R. Corless and P. Knitter, *Buddhist Emptiness and Christian Trinity. Essays and Explorations*, New York 1990, pp.44-66.

31 P. Ingram, 'Buddhist Shunyata and the Christian Trinity: a response to Michael von Bruck', in Corless and Knitter, *op. cit.*, pp.67-74, p.71.

'emptiness' to its relevant basic Buddhist setting of *anityatā* 'impermanence', be it the world of physical matter or mental constructs.

So far this could seem like abstract philosophy, but Ingram then brings out the very real practical implications of this stance by Nāgārjuna, as indeed of *anityatā* itself, which is that:

Accordingly if we experience everything as empty of 'own being', including our philosophical doctrines, we cease clinging (*upādāna*) to them, because in an impermanent universe, there is nothing to which I can cling. And when we stop clinging, we cease experiencing life as unsatisfactory (*duḥkha*)³².

Ingram shows some fine touches in not translating *duḥkha* as a blanket 'painfulness', a translation often criticised by Buddhists. What he also brings out is the core functionalist/practical orientation of Buddhism. In doing so Ingram reasserts, not so much metaphysical analysis in terms of 'concepts' like *anityatā* and *śūnyatā*, but rather the underlying psychological 'drives' like *trṣṇā* and *upādāna* — which could and should be cut by means of ethics and meditation training. The result for Ingram is that 'surely a serious religious motivation underlays Nāgārjuna's application of his dialectic to all philosophical views (*drṣṭi*)'³³. Ingram serves as a good model of how to approach and thereby understand the dynamics of Buddhist expression.

This flexibility of presentation is not just a Mahāyāna feature. Sangharakshita has already been mentioned over the distinction that he perceives in Pāli texts between statements pertaining to Dhamma, Absolute 'Truth' claims, and those to Vinaya, effective

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

practice generating techniques of 'Discipline' training. Probably the best indication of this basic flexibility of presentation comes from the Pāli Vinaya Piṭaka where the Buddha is asked for a definition of the Truth (Dhamma). He could have given a range of key Buddhist concepts, which on other occasions he did — such as the five *khandhas* ('aggregates' of matter, sensation, perception, mental activities, consciousness), *Paṭiccasamuppāda* ('Conditioned Genesis/Dependent Origination'); the Three Universal Laws (of *anicca*, *anatta* and *dukkha*), and so forth. However, on this occasion the Buddha does not and instead gives what can be seen as a purely, yet profoundly, functional response:

Of **whatsoever** teachings thou can assure thyself thus: 'Those doctrines **conduce** to passions not dispassions: to bondage, not to detachment: to increase of (worldly) gains, not to decrease of them: to covetousness, not to frugality: to discontent, and not content: to company, not solitude: to sluggishness, not energy: to delight in evil, not delight in good' — of such teachings thou may with certainty affirm 'This is not the Dhamma, this is not the Discipline. This is not the Master's Message'. But of whatsoever teachings thou can assure thyself... [as above, but opposite] — of such teachings you may with certainty affirm 'This is the Dhamma'³⁴.

The phrase that stands out is the 'whatsoever teachings conduce' to those certain types of qualities.

This keys into the whole point of Nāgārjuna's *śūnyatā* metaphysics which indeed is potentially an effective way of cutting *trṣṇā*, clinging desire, thereby generating more beneficial changes in the trainee. Buddhist meditation exercises, varied

Ch'an/Zen iconoclasm and Pure Land devotion can all be fitted into this pragmatic ego-reducing criterium.

This gives a subtle flexibility to questions of Buddhist doctrine. The metaphor traditionally used for the Buddhist teachings is that of a raft, used to get one across to the other shore, as in the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya and discussed by Rahula amongst others³⁵. However, it is the other shore that is the most important thing. Having got there one does not still wander about carrying ('attached to') the raft on one's back. In a similar way the Buddhist teachings were the 'means', albeit significant and effective, rather than the 'end'. If this subtle distraction was lost sight of, then Buddhist teachings could themselves become a form of spiritual clinging and grasping, and as such a hindrance to further spiritual progress. This type of concern is very clearly picked up in the Ch'an/Zen schools of Buddhism.

Considerations like this reflect the (ultimate) priority which the experiential dimension has within the Buddhist religious framework. Such an experiential focus also brings out a further study nuance concerning Buddhism. This is that a lot of training, and thus written texts, reflect an intimate teacher-pupil framework. There are indeed 'universal' texts such as the First Sermon at Benares in the Theravāda tradition, or the Diamond and Heart Sūtras in that of the Mahāyāna. However, most Pāli suttas present teachings in the context of a specific problem being faced by a particular disciple, to whom the Buddha gives a specific and appropriate response, through recalling an analogous situation in which he himself had previously been involved. Christian theologians have drawn a distinction between Gospel language that is definitional/ontological and that which is a 'language of faith'. In

34 Vinaya Piṭaka 2.10, see F. Woodward, *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, London 1973, p.186.

35 Rahula, *op. cit.*, pp.9-15.

an analogous way Buddhist texts should not just be seen in an isolated 'fixed' way. A similar situation is faced with Zen stories and *koān* 'riddles' which are very much spontaneous yet appropriate responses in a master-pupil setting. Buddhist teachings do not exist within an isolated textual form. Taking refuge in the Dharma is complemented by the taking of refuge in the Sangha as well; *prajñā* (wisdom) is underpinned by the practice strands of *śīla* (ethics) and *samādhi* (meditation).

(3) THE WIDER CONTEXT OF BUDDHISM

The preceding Buddhist features give Buddhism a distinctive thrust in inter-faith matters. Certainly internal divisions between Mahāyāna schools have been heated at times, as with the Nichiren school's denunciation of other Buddhist groups in Japan. Equally, the Mahāyāna-Hinayāna divergence also generated polemical-type material at times³⁶. There are certain formal criteria such as 'ethical free-will' used in Buddhism to distinguish between positions considered 'totally false' (*abrahmacaryavāsā*), those that are 'unsatisfactory but not necessarily false' (*anassāsika*), and those that are true. Nevertheless, with its underpinning functionalist criteria Buddhism has not generated the same insistence on tight orthodoxy or indeed orthopraxis as perhaps other religions have. Other factors that have played a rôle in this tendency have been that rage, pride and anger have been considered as fetters (*kleśas*) to be broken; and that non-killing has been the first of the formal Buddhist precepts.

There is the interesting example of the Buddhist emperor Aśoka (Priyadarśi), whose conversion to Buddhism in the third century BCE brought about proclamations of an unusual breadth

36 R. Kent, 'A sectarian interpretation of the rise of the Mahāyāna', *Religion* 12, 1982, pp.311-12.

of vision, namely that:

Faiths of others all deserve to be honoured for one reason or another. If a man extols his own faith and disparages another... he seriously injures his own faith. Therefore concord alone is commendable for through [it] men may learn and respect the concept of Dharma accepted by others. . . King Priyadarśi does not value gifts or honours as much as growth in the qualities essential to religion in men of all faiths³⁷.

If Buddhism defines itself as primarily a practice of *śīla-samādhi* (ethics and meditation) fostering *prajñā* (wisdom), then this also opens the way up to more positive appreciation of the ethical and spiritual values embedded in other religious traditions. An interesting area has been the joint work between Christian and Buddhist scholars, as with the translation and commentary of the Dhammapada by John Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana.

The arrival of Buddhism in the West has in itself led to some interesting inter-faith settings. Buddhist contemplation frameworks have, for example, become much more approachable through the appearance of Buddhist centres in the West. Other features of Buddhism in the West have also fostered inter-faith settings, directly in local inter-faith groups and larger networks. This has also been shown in a related community way through wider activities, such as various peace campaigns (e.g. Battersea Peace Pagoda, London Buddhist Vihāra's support for and representation on the 'Faith, Asylum and Refugees' campaign) and environmental issues. Islamic writers have recommended such types of activities as being a particularly fruitful area for co-operation be-

37 Rock Edict XII: see N. Nikam and R. McKeon, tr., *The Edicts of Asoka*, Chicago 1956, pp.51-2.

tween Islam and Buddhism in the West³⁸.

For the study of Buddhism, one straightforward area is the interface between 'internal' Buddhism and its 'external' presentation through Western Buddhists, bridging some of the academic and religious divide. Within a British context, Buddhist figures like Ken Jones or Sangharakshita, and academics like John Crook, Lance Cousins, Peter Harvey, Stewart Macfarlane and Paul Williams, exemplify this helpful development. The old dichotomy between Western outsiders and Asian insiders may be breaking down to some extent, to the benefit of understanding Buddhist descriptive details and dynamics.

Furthermore the arrival of Buddhism in the West also raises the issue of whether Buddhism is crossing cultural boundaries to establish a truly 'Western' form of Buddhism. Here there are a range of issues. One is the appearance of Buddhism within the context of New Age religious movements. Certainly, the growth of eclectic Buddhist forms, perhaps exemplified by early figures such as Alan Watts, has partly fostered this image. Cross-references between Buddhism and psychology have been an interesting area for study, not surprisingly in view of the importance of the 'mind' in Buddhist theory (e.g. Abhidharma analysis) and above all meditation, *bhāvanā* 'mind discipline'³⁹.

38 S. Gilliat, 'Islamic and Buddhist doctrines of Personhood: some reflections for interfaith dialogue', *World Faiths Encounter* 6, London 1993, pp.28-32; D. Scott, 'Buddhism and Islam. Past to present encounters and interfaith lessons', *Numen* 42, 1995, pp.141-55.

39 D.T. Suzuki, *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*, London 1960; P. de Silva, *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology*, Colombo 1973; *idem.*, *Tangles and Webs: Comparative Studies in Existentialism, Psychoanalysis and Buddhism*, Colombo 1974/1976; S. Katz (ed.), *Buddhism and Western Psychology*, Boulder 1983; R. Moacanin, *Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism*, London 1986; J. Crook and

Linkages between Buddhism and New Science have also been quite startling, with figures like Capra and Puligandla, a development which has overlapped back into mysticism⁴⁰. The 1994 Open University course 'Religious Diversity in Britain since 1945' implicitly makes this judgement on Buddhism within a chapter on New Age religious movements, whereas Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are treated in their own right. Here criticism can be offered on this evaluation, as Buddhism has in a quiet way established itself in several traditional and organic forms. The fact that it is not so ethnically-based as those other traditions has paradoxically given it less recognition.

The forms of Buddhism that have established themselves in the West are varied. The *Buddhist Directory* produced by the Buddhist Society gives an interesting range of examples for the United Kingdom. Some are Theravāda, in very traditional forms like the London Vihāra (Sri Lankan) and the Buddhapadipa Temple (Thai), or like Chithurst based on Western followers (of Ajahn Chah). Others follow Mahāyāna traditions, notably Tibetan (e.g. Samye Ling Centre), Zen (e.g. Throssel Hole Priory) and Nichiren groups. The situation is similar in the United States, except that Theravāda is less well established. A key issue is the extent to which these forms are responding to and being influenced by Western modes and needs, perhaps particularly with respect to the laity, gender, social and economic issues. One movement in Britain that expressly concerns itself with this issue is the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) set up by

David Fontana (ed.), *Space in Mind. East-West Psychology and Contemporary Buddhism*, Shaftesbury 1990.

40 E.g. R. Puligandla, *An Encounter with Awareness*, Boston 1981; F. Capra, *The Tao of Physics: an Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, London/Shambhala 1983.

Sangharakshita. As the title suggests, they see themselves as expressing Buddhism in a Western way. Of course this is a controversial area. The recent evaluation by Mellor that the FWBO represented a 'Protestant Buddhism' shows the vigour of the debate — the more so in light of the criticisms made of his study by FWBO members⁴¹. This may have revealed elements of the insider-outsider dictotomy suggested at the beginning of this article.

A further manifestation of the interface between Buddhism and the West may be in the growth of ecumenical courtesy and awareness between Buddhist traditions, previously divided on ethnic, cultural and historical grounds. In the United States, the growth of 'meta-institutes', or pan-Buddhist frameworks, may be evolving, as exemplified by Havanpola Ratanasara based in California. Such developments are generally beneficial for furthering the study of Buddhism, given the involvement of academics in that process, and given the further impetus to establishing common fundamental Buddhist positions and applications to the modern world. Even the explosion of information technology is creating a more flexible and accurate base for the academic study of Buddhism, as reflected for example in the Pāli Canon CD ROM project at Columbia University.

OVERVIEW

At the end of all this we have a tradition that can indeed be

41 P. Mellor, 'Protestant Buddhism. The cultural translation of Buddhism in England', *Religion* 21, 1991, pp.73–92; Kulananda, 'Protestant Buddhism?', *Religion* 22, 1992, pp.101–4; Mellor, 'The FWBO and tradition. A reply to Dharmachari Kulananda', *ibid.*, pp.104–7. In a more general way, see Subhuti, *Buddhism for Today. A Portrait of a New Buddhist Movement*, Salisbury 1983; Sangharakshita, *New Currents in Western Buddhism*, London 1990.

called a religion, if we avoid equating the term merely with being that of a particular theistic Judaeo-Christian nature. With a sense of the sacred and of wider transcendental (and interior) dimensions to human existence, which can be reached and experienced, Buddhism is a religion. In the ways in which Buddhism itself expressed its sense of the sacred, and indeed with respect to ways (paths) of reaching it, one needs to be on the lookout for something of the diversity represented through the flowering of various 'Buddhist' schools and traditions. Nevertheless, there needs also to be awareness of the basic Buddhist identity able to be picked out and discerned through such different (surface?) expressions. In terms of its nature as a philosophy, applied psychology or ethical conduct — Buddhism is all of these but underpinned by a transformational liberating pragmatism.

A final area to note consists of fruitful cross-cultural and disciplinary comparisons involving Buddhism. This has expressed itself in attempts both to perceive and create a truly global ethic, as discussed by figures such as Cuppit, Hick and Kung. It has also expressed itself in the interface developing between Buddhism and Western schools of analytical philosophy, pragmatism, existentialism and deconstructionism — generating 'comparative philosophy' on a much wider East-West scale⁴². The term 'global village' can apply to the interchange and stimulation of ideas as well as technology. Amidst such developments it is tempting to

42 Excellent review survey by F. Hoffman, 'Contemporary Buddhist Philosophy: a bibliographical essay', *Asian Philosophy* 2.1, 1992, pp.79–100, esp. pp.91–5 for Buddhism and Western schools of philosophy. See also pp.98–9 for 'Contemporary Buddhist philosophy in the 1990s and beyond'. Examples of this are C. Gudmundsen, *Wittgenstein and Buddhism*, London 1977; S. Batchelor, *Alone with Others: an Existential Approach to Buddhism*, New York 1983; B. Inada and N. Jacobson, *Buddhism and American Thinkers*, New York 1984.

talk of shifting paradigms of expression, consciousness and concern; within and between religious traditions, and also within and between cultures. This is well illustrated by Jacobson's portrayal of convergence between Buddhism as a 'process'-oriented tradition linking up with American Process philosophy (e.g. Hartshorne, Dewy) and Process theology (e.g. Cobb) — amidst what he calls the emerging 'third human frontier' of global interdependence and awareness⁴³. Buddhism may then have a wider rôle to play in any evolving global consciousness as we move into the twenty-first century. Any such process is itself worthy of both academic study and contribution.

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43 N. Jacobson, *The Heart of Buddhist Philosophy*, Carbondale 1988, pp.133–5.

BUDDHISM AND THE DILEMMAS OF DEATH A BIBLIOGRAPHIC INTRODUCTION

Damien Keown

The themes of impermanence, decay and death are omnipresent in Buddhist literature. In many Asian countries Buddhism is recognised as the authority *par excellence* on matters pertaining to death and is closely linked to the rites and ceremonies associated with the transition from this life to the next. Meditation on death is recommended as a corrective to over-attachment to the body and sources also emphasise the importance of meeting death mindfully, since the last moment in one life can be particularly influential in determining the quality of the next rebirth.

Although the themes of impermanence, decay and death pervade Buddhist primary sources, surprisingly little attention has been paid to them in secondary literature. While both popular and scholarly writings on the subject can be found, the latter (with a few notable exceptions) generally take the form of chapters and papers rather than monographs.

The aim of this paper is to provide an introduction to the ethical issues which surround death and the limited literature which addresses them from a Buddhist perspective. It raises occasional questions and criticisms but makes no attempt to offer definitive solutions. Instead it is hoped it will encourage others to consult the sources for themselves in order to reach informed conclusions about issues which for one reason or another Buddhism has been slow to address.

1. DEATH

A good introduction to Buddhism and death in the context of the non-orthodox Indian traditions is R.C. Amore, 'The Heterodox

Philosophical Systems' in *Death and Eastern Thought*, ed. Frederick H. Holck (Nashville, TN, 1974, pp.114-63). Amore discusses the centrality of death and impermanence in Buddhism making reference to Siddhartha's renunciation of princeliness, the death meditations and the debates over the ontological status of the Tathāgata after death. He discusses the importance attached by various scriptures to being focused on the Three Jewels at the moment of death in order to achieve a good rebirth and the development of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* in Tibet. The author also discusses death in Jainism and the other unorthodox sects and emphasises that Buddhism and these other sects naturalised death and removed the necessity for a priestly caste to perform sacrifices at death. Another general discussion of death relevant to Buddhism is N. Smart, 'Attitudes towards death in eastern religions' in *Man's Concern with Death*, ed. Arnold Toynbee et al. (London 1968, pp.95-115). John Bowker discusses Buddhism in his various writings on death, such as *The Meaning of Death* (Cambridge 1991).

William LaFleur discusses the centrality of death-awareness to Japanese Buddhism, especially Zen, and the development of a corpus of 'Great Death' stories of various Buddhist masters (W.R. LaFleur, 'Japan' in *Death and Eastern Thought*, *op. cit.*, pp.226-56). Also relevant is S. Picken, 'The Understanding of Death in Japanese Religion' (*Japanese Religion* 9, 4, 48, July 1977). Traditional Japanese attitudes to death are reviewed by Eric A. Feldman in the first part of his paper 'Defining Death: Organ Transplants, Tradition and Technology in Japan' (*Social Science and Medicine* 27, 1988, pp.339-43). James Whitehill discusses what can be learned from the death of the Buddhist masters in his article, 'Mystological Death: Buddhist Lessons on Dying and Selfhood' (*The Drew Gateway*, 1974, pp.82-99). General reflections on death will be found in Philip Kapleau's anthology *The Wheel*

of Death (London 1972) and the topics of suicide and euthanasia are treated briefly in his later book *The Wheel of Life and Death* (New York 1989). A short discussion on the care of terminal patients who are Buddhists may be found in J. Neuberger, *Caring for Dying People of Different Faiths* (The Lisa Sainsbury Foundation Series, ed. V. Darling and P. Clench, London 1987, pp.39-46).

Stephen Lewis is the author of several books dealing with the subject of death from a Zen perspective, notably *Who Dies?: an Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying* (New York 1982). A Tibetan perspective is provided by Sogyal Rinpoche's popular volume *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (London 1992). The Tibetan tradition has given more prominence than other Buddhist schools to the subject of death in its literature and iconography; apart from the many translations of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, see also Glenn H. Mullin, *Death and Dying in Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca 1995, Ch.10).

II. DEFINITIONS OF DEATH AND ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION

Few writers have addressed the question of a Buddhist definition of death directly. Among those who have is Louis H. van Loon in his chapter 'A Buddhist Viewpoint' (in *Euthanasia*, Human Sciences Research Council Publication No.65, ed. G.C. Oosthuizen, H.A. Shapiro and S.A. Strauss, Cape Town 1978, pp.56-79). Van Loon is of the opinion that Buddhism understands death as neo-cortical death, that is to say, the death of the upper brain, but cites no textual authority in support of his opinion. This view has been criticised by the present author who suggests that Buddhism would not accept such a position. I define the Buddhist concept of death as 'the irreversible loss of integrated organic functioning', and offer as the Buddhist criterion for death 'the irreversible loss of the functions of the brainstem' (*Buddhism and Bioethics*,

London 1995, p.158). This definition of death in biological terms contrasts with the metaphysical one offered by Nakasone: 'Based on the doctrine of interdependence, death is understood to be the dissolution of the mind and body' (Ronald Nakasone, 'Buddhism', in *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, New York 1994, pp.312-18). Support for the concept of brainstem death is also provided by Bh. Mettanando in 'Buddhist Ethics in the Practice of Medicine' (*Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society: An International Symposium*, ed. Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Sandra A. Wawrytko, New York etc. 1991, pp.195-213).

In 'Buddhist views of suicide and euthanasia' (*Philosophy East and West* 40, 1990, pp.543-56), Carl B. Becker cites a number of papers in Japanese from the Japan Ethics Association 39th Annual Conference at Waseda University, October 14-15 1988, including one by Anzai Kazuhiro entitled *Nō to sono ishiki* (Brain and its consciousness). Becker reports that 'The majority agreed with Anzai Kazuhiro's early presentation that brain death should not be equated with human death' (p.543). Other papers mentioned from the conference are Morioka Masahiro, *Nōshi to wa nan de atta ka* (What was brain death) and Kawasaki Shinjō, *Tōyō kodai no seimei juyō* (The accepted understanding of life in the Ancient Orient). All appear in the *Nihon Rinri Gakkai kenkyū happyo yoshi* (Japan Ethics Association outline of presentations), to which the author of this article has not had access. The issue is discussed again by Becker in *Breaking the Circle: death and the afterlife in Buddhism* (Carbondale 1993, pp.126-31).

In his short paper in *The Lancet* (vol.338, No.8774, 1991, pp.1063-4), Jiro Nudeshima states 'In Japan neither the concept of brain death nor the practice of organ transplantation are accepted' (p.1063). He explains the cultural background to this resistance as lying in two areas: a more community-centred concept of the 'person' whereby the beginning and end of life are determined by

rites of passage as opposed to biological criteria, and 'paternalistic decision making in medicine and government' (p.1064). He reports that the Prime Minister's Ad Hoc Committee on Brain Death and Organ Transplantation set up in March 1990 'cannot properly confront the key issues because its members and officials are not comfortable with such open dialogue' (*ibid.*). However, he suggests there is evidence that public opinion is slowly becoming favourable both to the criterion of brain death and organ transplantation.

Eric A. Feldman reviews Shintō and Buddhist attitudes to death in an attempt to understand contemporary Japanese resistance to brain death and organ transplants in his 'Defining Death: Organ Transplants, Tradition and Technology in Japan' (*Social Science and Medicine* 27, 1988, pp.339-43). He draws some tentative conclusions regarding a connection between the traditional and modern concepts of death. The Shintō belief in a period of forty-nine days during which the soul was neither part of the living nor the ancestors contrasts with the sharp distinction between life and death made by modern criteria. Feldman refers to K. Bai ('Contemporary problems of medical law in Japan', *Annals of the Institute of Social Science* 11, 1970, pp. 37-9) which proposes that an 'alpha period' be recognised between the declaration of brain death and the stoppage of the heart.

Feldman identifies several cultural reasons why the Japanese are uncomfortable with transplantation. The belief that the dying do not wholly leave this world means that organ transplantation comes to be seen as 'an unnatural and unnecessary infringement in the dying process' (p.342). The belief that body and soul remain together in the next life may cause a fear that organ donors will be unable to live in the future. Finally, cutting up the bodies of people who are shortly to become one's ancestors in order to harvest their organs seems to violate the respect that is their due.

Problems regarding consent and economic factors may also play some part. The issue of consent is discussed by K. Bai and K. Hirabayashi in the 1984 *Symposium: A Comparative Legal Study of Organ Transplantation*, part III, 'Whose consent shall make organ removal lawful?' (*Comparative Law Journal* 46, 1984, pp.291-4). Feldman concludes by suggesting 'it is probably true that in the future Japan will become as active in organ transplantation as most nations in the West' (p.342). Public acceptance of brain death seems to be growing as professional groups and universities develop criteria, and as pressure from potential beneficiaries grows. Furthermore, countries such as The Philippines have raised objections to Japanese patients going abroad for transplants rather than building an organ retrieval system of their own. Also relevant to these issues is M. Lock and C. Honde, 'Reaching Consensus about Death: Heart Transplants and Cultural Identity in Japan', in *Social Science Perspectives on Medical Ethics*, ed. G. Weisz (New York 1990, pp.99-119).

The most informed discussion of the situation in Japan to date is Helen Hardacre ('Response of Buddhism and Shinto in the Issue of Brain Death and Organ Transplant', *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 3, 1994, pp.585-601). Hardacre speaks of 'deep divisions' (p.587) within the medical profession with respect to the concept of brain death. She notes the traditional Japanese objections to brain death and organ transplants but draws attention to the influence of another element in the debate, namely 'ethnic chauvinism'. She quotes the view of Umehara Takeshi that 'Japan should advocate a way of its own' and notes: 'The specter of mindless imitation of the West is linked to a prediction of doom in the form of Japan losing its own identity and becoming a puppet of the West, its surrogate in consuming the life blood of fellow Asians' (p.593). She is also critical of over-generalisations by authors such as Nudeshima with respect to the

influence of cultural factors, noting 'It is no more true that everyone in the West considers their existence principally in terms of the autonomous self questing for release from the prison of relations with other people than that everyone in Japan is so mired in sticky relationships that they have no access to a consciousness of personal identity' (p.594).

From a religious perspective, Christian leaders have expressed support for organ transplants based mainly on the principle of altruism, but Buddhism and Shintō have made little contribution to the debate. Hardacre observes that the greatest challenge for adherents of traditional views is 'finding a doctrinal basis on which to stand' (*ibid.*). In the context of Buddhism, she notes attempts to differentiate between life and death through the presence or absence of the *ālaya*, and also references to the doctrines of karma and dependent co-arising. Given that all conditions are in a state of flux, 'It is difficult to reconcile this view with an overriding priority on any physical organ or any particular moment' (p.596). Hardacre concludes that 'Most . . . Buddhist leaders have stopped short of taking a position of firm opposition, but their doctrinal investigations have turned up little that could be used as the basis for an affirmative position' (p.598). Surprisingly, in view of the Mahāyāna emphasis on compassion, altruism takes second place to 'the anguish of survivors pressured to give over the bodies of their loved ones before they have been able to provide for appropriate ritual' (*ibid.*).

A more positive attitude towards transplantation is revealed in K.L. Tsomo, 'Opportunity or Obstacle: Buddhist views of organ donation' (*Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* II, 4, 1993, pp.30-5). The author is an American woman and a Gelugpa nun who surveyed teachers from many different traditions about their attitude to donation. All were positive and emphasised that the corpse is merely an empty vessel, and that to give of oneself is a great

thing and an act of compassion. She explores the contradiction between organ donation and the traditional Tibetan belief that the *viññāna* is still connected to the body for many days after death, and that surgery might disrupt the practitioner's *samādhi* and thereby the consequent rebirth. But she notes that her Tibetan monk consultant thought donation would still be a good idea and that the other Buddhist traditions believe the *viññāna* is severed from the body almost immediately.

Reasoning from Abhidhammic principles, S.H.J. Sugunasiri reaches four somewhat idiosyncratic conclusions on organ transplantation in 'The Buddhist View Concerning the Dead Body' (*Transplantation Proceedings* 22, 1990, pp.947-9). The first is that 'The transplantation of any part of the body... is merely an act of technology, much like replacing a carburetor in a car'. The second affirms the moral acceptability of interspecies transplants. The third suggests that rejection may be 'a function of, not only material, but of mental incompatibility as well', while a fourth suggests that 'the mental quality of the donor could influence the future course of thought and behaviour of the recipient' (p.948). The first of these conclusions seems strangely at odds with the last two, and the idea that a detached bodily organ retains the psychological properties of its owner seems most unlikely.

From the Thai perspective, Pinit Ratanakul notes that 'most neurosurgeons in metropolitan Bangkok have adopted the Harvard criteria of brain death' but that neither this nor the heart-lung criteria are 'congruent with the Thai cultural understanding of death' (Pinit Ratanakul, 'Thailand: Redefining Cultural Values', *The Hastings Center Report* 20, 1990, pp.25-7, p.26). According to Ratanakul this cultural understanding is based on the Buddhist teaching that 'upholds a holistic view and speaks of death in terms of the death of a person and not the death of cells, tissues, or organs. Death is thus defined as total cessation of mental and

physical functions' (p.27).

Nakasone (*op. cit.*) in one paragraph asserts that Buddhism rejects the brain death definition of death: 'Based on the doctrine of interdependence, death is understood to be the dissolution of the mind and body'. Nakasone also rejects organ transplants on the peculiar grounds that: 'Organ transplantation is often possible only at the expense of another's life. Such a procedure violates the precept against taking life and diminishes the value of life. Consequently, some Buddhists [no citations] advocate the development and use of artificial organs. Rather than extending life through heroic measures, Buddhists would rather expend energy on care of the dying'. He subsequently acknowledges that some Buddhists consider organ transplantation acceptable and a 'gift of life'.

III. SUICIDE

There are no monographs on suicide and only a limited periodical literature. What is urgently required is a study of the subject which offers a classification of the various kinds of voluntary death encountered in Buddhist literature and in the present day. The self-immolation of Buddhist monks during the Vietnam war is a notable example of the latter. Due to the subtle gradation between suicide and other forms of voluntary death (for example, sacrificing one's life to save others) particular attention must be paid to the circumstances and motive in each case. What secondary literature there is presents opposing viewpoints on the morality of voluntary death. The majority of sources see Buddhism as opposed to suicide while others believe there may be exceptional cases in which it is justifiable.

The difference in interpretation owes something to the apparent ambiguity within early sources surrounding the question of suicide. In his important article, 'The Suicide Problem in the Pali

Canon' (*Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 6, 1983, pp.12-40), Martin Wiltshire suggests that suicide appears 'to be regarded equivocally' in the Pāli Canon in that it is 'both censored and condoned'. Wiltshire summarises as one of the main findings of the paper that 'Suicide need not necessarily be regarded as wrongful in Buddhism, since the body is prospectively dead anyway' (p.137), but without explaining why murder would not be wrongful from the same view. The subject is treated by Étienne Lamotte in his paper 'Religious Suicide in Early Buddhism' (*Buddhist Studies Review* 4, 1987, pp.105-18). Lamotte expresses the questionable view that in Buddhism 'morality only rules our behaviour in relation to others, but does not impose on us any duty with regard to ourselves' (p.105). This ignores the fact that Buddhist morality does not normally distinguish between self and other, and understands the moral life as promoting the good of both simultaneously. On this basis one could reasonably speak of duties to oneself as much as duties to others. To exclude oneself as an object of moral obligation seems arbitrary.

Lamotte distinguishes three forms of suicide: i) suicide through disgust for the world, practised by the enlightened saints; ii) self-sacrifice in a spirit of altruism, as displayed by bodhisattvas; iii) suicide as a form of homage to the Buddha and his Doctrine. Arvind Sharma considers Durkheim's views in 'Emile Durkheim on Suicide in Buddhism' (*Buddhist Studies Review* 4, 1987, pp.119-26). Noting Durkheim's conclusion that Buddhism condemned suicide, Sharma draws attention to the kinds of examples noted in Lamotte's first category and asks whether we need a new category of 'salvific suicide' (p.124).

Becker (*op. cit.*) asserts that the Buddhist tradition, especially in Japan, is very tolerant of suicide and euthanasia. He cites the Pāli cases of the monks Vakkali, Channa and Godhika discussed by Wiltshire and others and mentions a Chinese example of a dis-

ciple jumping out of a tree to reach the Pure Land and the self-immolation by Vietnamese monks as evidence for the conclusion 'there is nothing intrinsically wrong with taking one's own life, if it is not done in hate, anger or fear' (p.548). Citing examples from Japanese history, including samurai suicides, Becker suggests that 'the Japanese Buddhist world does not condemn suicide' (p.550). The same points are made in *Breaking the Circle* (*op. cit.*, pp. 135-47). Robert E. Florida, ('Buddhist Approaches to Euthanasia', *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 22, 1993, pp.35-47) seems to endorse this view in his discussion of suicide in the context of euthanasia (pp.40ff) when he states: 'the Buddha condoned suicide, provided it was done unselfishly without grasping or craving' (p.41). Both authors place a great deal of weight on motive which, while of great importance, perhaps needs to be assessed in the context of what is done.

Louis H. van Loon reviews the Pāli sources in 'Some Buddhist Reflections on Suicide' (*Religion in Southern Africa* 4, 1983, pp. 3-12) and concludes: 'Suicide is not a genuine "Cessation of suffering" — the Third Noble Truth in Buddhism. The latter vanquishes Suffering; suicide is a succumbing to it. Suicide is therefore a futile act. . . In addition, suicide has an antisocial dimension: one denies one's fellow creatures the benefit of one's humanitarian actions towards them' (p.11). He suggests that these arguments do not apply to the enlightened person (*arhat*) who has already abolished suffering. 'It is therefore unthinkable that he would wish to, or have a need to, commit suicide. However, in exceptional circumstances he may, like Godhika, choose to remove a Samsaric "Remainder" when he judges his spent physical body to have become a hindrance to Nirvanic realisation and humanitarian service' (*ibid.*).

Contrary to the long tradition of scholarship which holds suicide to be permissible for Arhats, I suggest that a closer study

of the cases in the Pāli Canon cited in support of Arhat suicide does not support the claim that suicide for the enlightened is morally permissible (Damien Keown, 'Buddhism and Suicide: the case of Channa', *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3, 1996, pp.8-31). I examine the strongest of the Pāli suicide cases, that of the monk Channa, and conclude that it would be unsound on the basis of the textual evidence to conclude that the Buddha condoned suicide. For an account of the events leading up to a contemporary suicide by a Theravāda monk, see Stephen Batchelor, 'Existence, Enlightenment, and Suicide: The Dilemma of Nanavira' (*The Buddhist Forum* IV, ed. T. Skorupski, London 1996, pp.9-33).

With respect to Mahāyāna sources, there is a short discussion of self-immolation in Walpola Rahula, 'Self-Cremation in Mahayana Buddhism' (*Zen and the Taming of the Bull. Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought*, ed. W. Rahula, London 1978, pp.111-14). Longer articles on the same subject have been published by Jean Filliozat, 'La Morte volontaire par le feu en la tradition bouddhique indienne' (*Journal Asiatique* 251, 1963, pp.21-51), and Jacques Gernet, 'Les suicides par le feu chez les bouddhistes chinois du Ve au Xe siècle' (*Mélanges publiés par l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises* II, 1960, pp.527-58). On the suicide of Vietnamese monks in modern times, see Charles Orzech, "Provoked Suicide" and a Victim's Behaviour. The Case of the Vietnamese Self-Immolators', in *Curing Violence*, ed. Theophus H. Smith and Mark I. Wallace (Sonoma, CA, 1994, pp.137-60).

For a comparative perspective on other Indian traditions, see U. Thakar, *The History of Suicide in India* (New Delhi 1963), which includes a short section on Buddhism. Also of interest is P. Bilimoria, 'The Jaina Ethic of Voluntary Death' (*Bioethics* 6, 1992, pp.330-55) and Justice T.K. Tukul, *Sallekhanā is not Suicide* (Ahmedabad 1976). Buddhist attitudes to suicide and euthanasia are discussed in the broader Indian context by Katherine K. Young

('Euthanasia: Traditional Hindu Views and the Contemporary Debate', in *Hindu Ethics. Purity, Abortion, and Euthanasia*, ed. H.G. Coward, J.J. Lipner and K.K. Young: McGill Studies in the History of Religions, Albany, NY, pp.71-130, pp.103ff).

IV. EUTHANASIA

Literature on euthanasia from a Buddhist perspective is sparse. There are a few short periodical articles and the subject is dealt with in passing in one or two books. In his 1978 paper on the subject referred to above, L.H. van Loon suggests that for Buddhism volition is 'the hallmark of true human existence' and that without it man is 'humanly dead'. He therefore rejects the Harvard definition of brainstem death and proposes a criterion of 'volitional death' or 'personality death' which takes place 'when the higher cognitive functions associated with volitional mentality are irretrievably lost or destroyed beyond repair' (p.77). A patient in this condition should be 'eased into as "natural" a death as possible' (p.76), as should one experiencing overwhelming pain, distress or suffering. This applies 'whether a patient is conscious or unconscious, and expressly requests euthanasia or not' (*ibid.*), from which it appears van Loon would support both voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. For a critique of van Loon's paper see Keown (1995, pp.180-5).

Robert Florida (*op. cit.*) provides an informed and balanced overview of the issues from a Theravādin perspective. He rules out active euthanasia on the grounds that the 'Buddha never condoned killing of others for reasons of mercy, even in cases of extreme suffering' (p.42). With respect to passive euthanasia he suggests 'there is no Buddhist consensus on passive euthanasia whether voluntary or involuntary' (*ibid.*). Florida makes the intriguing suggestion that the Buddha's decision not to extend his life and to eat contaminated food — foreseeing its fatal con-

sequence — lends support to passive euthanasia (p.45). By 'passive euthanasia' Florida understands 'allowing a patient to die by failing to institute life preserving procedures, by stopping them once begun or by taking steps to alleviate pain which might hasten the dying process' (p.42).

In *Buddhism and Bioethics* I note some ambiguity in the literature as to the precise meaning of 'passive euthanasia' and suggest that the essential ingredient in any form of euthanasia is the intention to cause death. I suggest that while Buddhism imposes no obligation to preserve life at all costs it is opposed to euthanasia in any form since the intention to cause death is always present. If this intention is absent, as is normally the case when treatments are either not embarked on or abandoned, or pain-killing drugs are administered, the death which ensues is not euthanasiast in the strict sense. Switching off a life-support machine, for example, does not count as passive euthanasia unless a 'quality of life' judgement has been reached that the patient's life is 'not worth living' and death would be a 'benefit'. If the machine is switched off following a decision to terminate the *treatment* (for example, because it is futile) as opposed to a decision to terminate the patient's *life* (because of its supposedly degraded quality), then the decision is not euthanasiast. The belief that life should not be prolonged needlessly and that patients should not be kept alive as prisoners of technology, therefore, while often confused with support for 'passive euthanasia', need have little to do with it.

Writing from the viewpoint of Tibetan Buddhism, physician Philip Lecso ('Euthanasia: A Buddhist Perspective', *Journal of Religion and Health* 25, 1986, pp.51-7) rejects euthanasia on two grounds, 'that of karma and the mode of death' (p.55). Lecso suggests that since a terminal illness is a karmic debt, interference in the process of dying would be an interference in personal karma.

His second objection is that the administration of narcotics clouds the mind, and Buddhism sets great store by a mindful death.

Ratanakul (*op. cit.*) reports 'a growing consensus among the Thai public that euthanasia (passive or active) is morally unjustifiable' (p.27). 'This cultural attitude towards euthanasia', he adds, 'makes it impossible for the Thai to allow impaired newborns to die untreated or to withhold any treatment' (*ibid.*). Similar points are made at greater length in P. Ratanakul, 'Bioethics in Thailand: The Struggle for Buddhist Solutions' (*Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 13, 1988, pp.301-12). The author suggests that euthanasia involves a subconscious transference of aversion to suffering to the patient (p.310).

Jennifer Green's short article 'Death with Dignity: Buddhism' (*Nursing Times* 85, 1989, pp.40-1) discusses only the practicalities of funeral arrangements and does not mention euthanasia. K. Umezawa's paper 'Medical Ethics in Japan' (*Biomedicine and Pharmacotherapy* 42, 1988, pp.169-72) mentions drug trials and AIDS but not brain death, organ transplantation or euthanasia.

In *Ethics of Enlightenment* (Fremont, CA, 1990) Ronald Y. Nakasone suggests that 'Evidence indicates that Buddhists would favour the "right-to-die" position' (p.76). He speculates that the *Samantapāsādikā* (wrongly attributed to Sanghabhadra) 'presents an attitude... akin to Helga Kuhse's search for a "principle of best interest"... which will allow voluntary euthanasia in those cases where this clearly is in the patient's best interests' (p.78). An article by myself and John Keown ('Karma, Killing and Caring: Buddhist and Christian Perspectives on Euthanasia', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 21, 1995, pp.265-9) also refers to Vinaya sources but reach an opposite conclusion, suggesting that Buddhism and Christianity would reject euthanasia on the grounds of their strict prohibition on the intentional destruction of life. Kapleau's volume *The Wheel of Life and Death* (*op. cit.*), contains a short

discussion of euthanasia in conjunction with suicide and it is suggested that Buddhism would reject the practice of either. Kapleau, an American Zen *rōshi*, observes that 'Buddhism is emphatic in its opposition to suicide' (p.31) and suggests that by virtue of the doctrine of karma euthanasia only displaces suffering rather than resolves it (p.135).

Euthanasia has been a special feature in two Buddhist magazines, *Raft* and *Tricycle*. *Raft*, the journal of the London-based Buddhist Hospice Trust, devoted its No.2 Winter 1989/90 issue to euthanasia. Sixteen pages in length, it contains short pieces by authors such as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Ajahn Sumedho, Dame Cicely Saunders and David Scott, exploring the cases for, against, and in terms of a middle way. A similar range of opinions will be found in the Winter 1992 edition of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* (11, 2) and which contains short articles by Patricia Anderson, Jeffrey Hopkins, Philip Kapleau, Chogyam Trungpa, and an interview with author Stephen Levine who is involved with the care of the terminally ill.

V. CONCLUSION

In spite of Buddhism's long familiarity with the subject of death few answers to the modern dilemmas death poses are found in traditional sources. The texts must be reread and interrogated carefully if sound moral conclusions are to be found which will allow contemporary Buddhism to state its position with clarity on the challenges posed by modern medicine. These questions are of importance beyond the immediate sphere of death and dying, since without a clear concept of death it is impossible to have a proper understanding of life.

Note: This article has been developed from a general bibliographic introduction to 'Buddhism and Medical Ethics' by the author and James J. Hughes (Journal of Buddhist Ethics 2, 1995, pp.105-24). I am indebted to James Hughes for some of the material used above

OBITUARY

Walpola Rahula (9 May 1907 — 18 September 1997)

With the death (in Colombo) of Ven. Dr Walpola Śrī Rāhula Mahāthera, Tripiṭakavāgiśvarācārya, Aggamahāpandita, the Buddhist world has lost of one its most reputable ganthadhura bhikkhus.

Born in the village of Walpola in the Galle district of southern Sri Lanka, he received a mainly private and monastic education. In 1936 he became the first monk to enter University College, Colombo, then affiliated to the the University of London. He graduated in 1941, undertook research at Calcutta with S.N. Dasgupta and B.M. Barua but returned the following year to commence his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of G.P. Malalasekera. He obtained his Ph.D. in 1950 for a seminal work which was published as *History of Buddhism in Ceylon. The Anuradhapura Period* (3rd century B.C. — 10th century A.C.) (Colombo 1956), translated as *Lankāvē Budusamayehi Itihāsaya* (1962) and into Chinese (Taipei 1968). Insofar as the subject matter is concerned, this monograph remains unsurpassed.

During the 1940s and in the wake of the independence struggle, he became the archetypal 'political monk' of S.E. Asia, openly espousing the radical socialist movement in his country. To encourage his confrères to forgo the seclusion of the established monastic surroundings and devote their energies 'for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many', he penned what became a manifesto: *Bhikṣuvagē Urumaya* (Colombo 1946), translated as *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu* (New York 1974). The monk was depicted as leader in the community in much the same way as his opposite number in the Greek Orthodox Church assumed that rôle during the Ottoman occupation.

On the initiative of Prof. Paul Demiéville at the Collège de France, a French Government post-doctoral research fellowship was granted to Dr Rahula in 1950 to enable him to research Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially the works of Asaṅga. At the Sorbonne he collaborated with all the great names of French

Indology — Louis Renou, Olivier Lacombe, Jean Filliozat, Marcelle Lalou and André Bareau. His sponsor and tutor, Demiéville, introduced him to Mgr Étienne Lamotte, the Belgian Buddhologist, and they remained lifelong friends. I.B. Horner, President of the Pali Text Society, also became a devoted and loyal friend.

While in Paris Rahula translated into French one of the most important and difficult Mahāyāna texts written in Sanskrit in the 4th century. Published under the title *Le Compendium de la Super-Doctrine (Philosophie) (Abhidharmasamuccaya) d'Asaṅga* (EFEO, 1971), this was the first time this work had ever been rendered into a Western language. [The French text is now in the course of translation by Sara Boin-Webb for publication by Asian Humanities Press, Fremont, California.] In his review (*T'oung Pao* LIX, 1972), J.W. de Jong proposed a French dictionary of Buddhist terms based on Rahula's Sanskrit-French and French-Sanskrit glossaries.

In 1964 he was invited to occupy the newly-created Chair of History and Literature of Religions at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois — the first professorship in the West to be held by a Buddhist monk. He remained in that position for ten years although this did not prevent his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of Vidyodaya University (1966-69). He moved to London in 1974 and served on the Council of the Pali Text Society. Thereafter, he was awarded honorary doctorates from the University of Sri Lanka and Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra (both 1978), University of Oriental Studies, Los Angeles (1979) and University of Kelaniya (1980). He was Cornell Visiting Professor at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania (1977) and Regents' Lecturer and Visiting Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles (1979).

Widely travelled in both East and West, Rahula delivered lectures and conducted seminars in numerous universities before finally retiring to Sri Lanka where he was appointed Chancellor of Kelaniya University and President of the Paramadhamma Buddhist Institute, a monastic training and educational centre. In 1981 he was instrumental in founding the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka and served as Consultant on the Editorial

Board of its annual journal, the *Sri Lanka Journal of Buddhist Studies*.

His numerous contributions to both scholarly periodicals and popular magazines were largely reprinted in *Zen and the Taming of the Bull* (London 1978) whilst his studies of the 'Buddha' and 'Asaṅga' appeared in, respectively, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th ed., 1974) and *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (II,1, 1966). A felicitation volume was presented to him under the title *Buddhist Studies in honour of Walpola Rahula* (ed. Somaratna Balasooriya et al., London 1980). However, the one single work that will undeniably perpetuate his memory is his best-selling primer, *What the Buddha Taught* (London 1959, New York 1962, and kept in print), which has been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Burmese, Sinhalese, Thai and Chinese (with Swedish in Ms). At a time when little authentic material on Buddhist doctrine was appearing in Europe, this volume (incorporating original translations from the Pāli Canon) almost overnight transformed the public's perception of what had hitherto been regarded as an obscure Oriental cult. Henceforth, the Buddhadhamma was to be studied seriously and practised conscientiously.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Index to the Vinaya-piṭaka. Compiled by Yumi Ousaka, Moriichi Yamazaki and K.R. Norman. The Pali Text Society, Oxford 1996, vii, 700 pp. £22.50. ISBN 0-86013-338-9.

The European edition of the Vinaya Piṭaka by Hermann Oldenberg was published in five volumes between 1879 and 1883 by Williams and Norgate, and has been reprinted by the Pali Text Society on a number of occasions since then. Finding one's way around this text, so important for the study of Buddhist monastic discipline, is not easy. Oldenberg's edition lacks an index; the indexes to Miss I.B. Horner's translation (*The Book of the Discipline*, published in six volumes in the Sacred Books of the Buddhists series between 1938 and 1966) include only selected words; the *Pāli Tipiṭakam Concordance* came to a halt in the middle of the letter B, and can consequently help for only half the alphabet.

All interested in the subject can, therefore, only welcome whole-heartedly this computer-generated index to the Vinaya Piṭaka, compiled by two of the three Japanese scholars who recently produced a volume of indexes to the Dhammapada (see previous review). In making the Vinaya index, for which the present reviewer provided technical advice, a number of misprints in Oldenberg's edition were tacitly corrected.

As in the case of the word index to the Dhammapada, words in crasis are listed exactly as they appear in the text, rather than as separate words. Moreover, since the sorting programme which was used does not distinguish between lower and upper case characters, there is no distinction in the index between common and proper names. Although these features are clearly inconvenient, the separation of words in juncture, and the provision of upper case initial letters, would have necessitated a great deal of emendation by hand which, in view of the size of the text, was not practicable.

It is perhaps inevitable that, when producing the edition of such a large text over several years, the editor was not always consistent in his conventions, especially in his punctuation and word division. We see, for example, that Oldenberg printed both *app' eva* and *app eva*. When more than one editor is involved,

the chance of such inconsistencies occurring is increased, so we find in the PTS edition of the Dīgha Nikāya that *appekacce*, *app ekacce* and *app' ekacce* are printed indiscriminately. Similarly, the crasis of *na* and *atthi* is printed in some texts as *natthi*, *n' atthi* or *na 'tthi*. Although such variations are of no great significance in themselves, since they merely represent editorial conventions for handling words which are written without punctuation or division in the manuscripts, it is obvious that they may lead to confusion when computer searches are launched. If such confusion is to be avoided in future, it may become necessary to impose some sort of standardisation of conventions when computerising Pāli texts.

K.R. Norman

Indexes to the Dhammapada. Compiled by Moriichi Yamazaki, Yumi Ousaka and Masahiro Miyao. Pali Text Society, Oxford 1995. vii, 139 pp. £12. ISBN 0-86013-337-0.

The new edition of the Dhammapada by O. von Hinüber and K.R. Norman, which was published by the Pali Text Society in 1994, was noticed in an earlier issue of this journal (*BSR* 11, 2, 1994, pp.187-88). It was accompanied by a complete word index to the Dhammapada based upon that made by Shoko Tabata and Tetsuya Tabata. Their index was, however, originally made to the edition by Sūriyagoda Sumaṅgala Thera, published by the PTS in 1914, and it had to be adapted manually to take account of the variant readings and different conventions of the new edition. In that adaptation a number of errors were unfortunately introduced into the index.

This new word index, prepared by a team of Japanese scholars who have already made *pāda* and reverse *pāda* indexes to a number of Jain canonical texts, was generated by computer from the disks which produced camera-ready copy from which the new edition of the Dhammapada was printed, and it is therefore error-free. Computer generation, however, does have one disadvantage. The index presents every word or word group exactly as it appears in the edition so that, for example, words in crasis appear in their combined form, rather than as separate words.

The volume also contains a *pāda* index. The use of this is

obvious. With it one can see if a *pāda* which occurs in another Pāli text also occurs in the Dhammapada. It also contains a reverse word index and a reverse *pāda* index. The uses of these may not be immediately obvious to readers, but anyone who has tried in vain to trace a parallel to a *pāda*, only to find later by chance that a partial parallel exists which does not include the first word, will welcome a means of finding parallels to the end of *pādas*. Such indexes are also of value to those working with fragments of manuscripts, where the beginning of a *pāda* may be lost. A reverse word index is of value when trying to trace parallels to fragments so small that even the initial letters of individual words have been lost.

As it becomes easier to make such indexes by computer, we may hope to see before long a complete *pāda* index to the whole Pāli Canon, and eventually to the whole of Pāli verse literature. This will be invaluable to all working in the field not only of Pāli literature but also of Prakrit and Buddhist Sanskrit literature.

K.R. Norman

Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden und der kanonischen Literatur der Sarvāstivāda-Schule. Sanskrit Dictionary of the Buddhist Texts from the Turfan Finds and of the Canonical Literature of the Sarvāstivāda School. Begonnen von Ernst Waldschmidt. Im Auftrage der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen herausgegeben von Heinz Bechert. 9. Lieferung: *ka / kukkuṭyāṇḍavat* — bearbeitet von Michael Schmidt und Siglinde Dietz. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1996. I-IV, 1-80 pp. DM 54.

With this ninth fascicle of the Göttingen Sanskrit Dictionary begins volume II of the SWTF, giving the entries beginning with consonants. As previously mentioned, in the earlier fascicles of SWTF no clear-cut line of demarcation between Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda texts was drawn, and even entries such as, for instance, *āryaĀvalokiteśvara* occur at SWTF I, 291, based on a Ms fragment of a protective charm found at Qizil. Accordingly, since it has been deemed more useful to restrict oneself to the bulk of Sarvāstivāda hailing from Central Asia, in his preface to

the present fascicle, the general editor states that whilst for SWTF I the *Bhikṣuṇī-Karmavācanā* was lexicographically exploited as a Sarvāstivāda work, it is no longer drawn upon in SWTF II because it turned out to be a Mūlasarvāstivāda source. On the other hand, due to an oversight the fragments *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden* (SHT) (III) 837 e, f, g, h were not taken into consideration; beginning with this second volume, however, they are used as source material, and entries taken from these fragments wanting in SWTF I will appear in a future supplementary volume.

Two further fragments, as set forth in the preface, will no longer be regarded as a textual basis for SWTF lexicography: SHT (VI) 1245 and SHT (III) 981. The latter fragment, although now to be considered irrelevant within the scope of SWTF, proves of great interest insofar as it has recently been identified (cf. SHT VII, Ergänzungen und Korrekturen zu Teil 1-6, S.372) as belonging to the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* just like SHT (III) 923, whose identification is pointed out in SHT VI, p.221. On account of the extreme rarity of Sanskrit quotations from the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* found in later Yogācāra commentaries, it is all the more remarkable that two Ms fragments of this sūtra have come down to us in their Sanskrit original from Central Asia.

As said in respect of previous fascicles, the compilers of SWTF, in consultation with many international scholars, have again provided the Buddhologist with a most trustworthy and helpful study tool, deserving the gratitude not only of the Sarvāstivāda specialist, but also of those working in the whole gamut of Buddhological disciplines such as, for instance, Pāli studies. An example may illustrate this remark.

At SWTF II, 74 are found the entries *kāṣṭha-kadamkara-ka* of SHT (IV) 30 m A3 and *kāṣṭha-ka[d](aṅgara?)* of SHT (IV) 162 d8 V(?)1. The latter fragment has a parallel at S V, 149 (Makkātasutta), viz. the parable of the monkey-trap. Because of his greed and foolishness a monkey gets caught in a trap of pitch. Having killed the animal, the hunter, according to F.L. Woodward, *Kindred Sayings* V, p.127, 'prepares him (for eating) there and then over a charcoal fire, and goes off at his pleasure': *tasmim yeva kaṭṭhakataṅgāre avasajjetvā yena kāmam pakkamati*.

Woodward is already aware of the doubtful reading of *kaṭṭha-kataṅgāre*, which some editions retain while others substitute it by another most probably conjectural reading (cf. Woodward, *ibid.*, n.4. 'Sinh. Mss would seem to mean "trussing him up and carrying him off on a stick".'). In CPD III (1), p.46, too, the 'problematic reading of uncertain meaning' is commented upon. As for the former entry, the compilers of SWTF surmise that *kāṣṭha-kaḍamkara* could correspond to Pāli *kaṭṭha-kaliṅgara* / *kaṭṭha-kaliṅgara* which is fully borne out by Udānavarga (Uv) I.35 and Dh 41 which is referred to in Edgerton's BHSD (p.165 under *kaḍaṅgara*). Here *kaḍaṅgaram* does in fact correspond to *kaliṅgaram* for which the Tibetan version of Uv (cf. Champa Thupten Zongste, Siglinde Dietz, ed., *Udānavarga*, Bd III, Der tibetische Text, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden X, 3, Göttingen 1990, I.36 (p.40)) has *mgal dum* (Jäschke: 'a large piece of wood split or cut'). The Gāndhārī Dh 153 (J. Brough ed., p.143) and the Patna Dh XIX.8 (G. Roth ed., p.129) offer very interesting intermediate forms, as it were, vis-à-vis the Pāli and Sanskrit: *kaḍiṅgara* and *kaṭiṅgara* respectively, containing cerebrals as in Sanskrit (*d, ṭ*), but showing the vowel 'i' as in Pāli. Edgerton translates this word, *inter alia*, as 'stick of wood'. If we adopt this meaning for **kataṅgāre* (which should be amended to **kaḍaṅgāre* / **kaḍaṅkare* / **kaliṅgare*), the above Pāli passage would make better sense, although uncertainties remain with regard to the gerund following the word under discussion: '[The hunter] . . . having fastened [him] just to that wooden staff [of his], goes wherever he likes'. As for this translation, instead of *avasajjetvā* / *avassajjetvā* the reading *āvajjetvā* (lit. 'having turned over'; PTSD: according to the commentaries, *āvajjeti* = *pariṇameti*, 'to bend to, obtain, appropriate') of the Sinhalese MSS has been adopted. The corresponding Chinese version of the Saṃyuktāgama text, referred to at SHT IV, p.106, n.22, runs: 獵師既至·即以杖貫·擔負而去。(T 2, 173b 28-9) — 'Hardly has the hunter arrived when he takes the staff, fastens [the monkey] to it and goes away, carrying [the load] on his shoulder'.

Bhikkhu Pāsādika

The Skill in Means (Upāyakauśalya) Sūtra. Mark Tatz. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1994. 128 pp. Rs 150.

This slim volume presents in the conventional format of copiously annotated translation preceded by equally copiously annotated introduction an early Mahāyāna work, noteworthy *inter alia* for its liberal ethics and for some interesting comments on the biography of the Buddha as understood at the time of its composition. The author of this translation has every right to congratulate himself on rescuing this text from comparative obscurity, though it was preserved not only independently but as part of the Ratnakūṭa collection, and the existence of a number of citations in Sanskrit (to say nothing of references in Chinese Buddhist encyclopaedias and a late Chinese translation in 1005 CE) do show that it was by no means immediately forgotten as Buddhism unfolded.

The translation is based on two Tibetan versions, the second, later and longer of which was also translated from what must have been a very similar Indian original into Chinese, and thence into English, albeit as part of a publication which has not been (and is not here, p.18) immune from criticism. At least the contention that both Chinese and Tibetan versions have been drawn upon is justified up to a point. The main problem in this work lies in the nature of the first Tibetan translation, deemed to be a rendering of one executed in China in 285 CE — on the 4th August, according to the earliest Chinese record. While it is not impossible that the Tibetan translator, Chos-grub (a.k.a. Fa-ch'eng, c.780-859/60) used this Chinese text as some sort of basis for his Tibetan version, a quick comparison reveals that the differences, while by no means radical, are too great to consider the Tibetan (at least as rendered into English here) a translation of the Chinese *tout court*, and we might well suppose that some other text could also have been referred to. Given that Chos-grub also seems to have had a good knowledge of Sanskrit, it may even be that his translation does not straightforwardly reflect a Chinese original at all.

At any rate the assumption that the oldest Tibetan version here done into English is a good witness to the oldest known form of this text seems to this reviewer to be questionable. There

is still scope for further work to be carried out on the earliest Chinese version: the monograph of S. Karashima on the earliest version of the *Lotus* (by the same Chinese translator), published in Tokyo in 1992 as *The textual study of Chinese versions of the Saddharmapundarika sūtra*, affords a good example of the results that may be derived from such research. In the meantime the volume under review provides a useful conspectus of what is so far known about this short but intriguing source. One hopes that some scholar linguistically equipped to take up the study of the earliest Chinese version will feel moved by its publication to embark upon the further investigations which are now clearly required.

T. H. Barrett

Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity: An Annotated Translation of Tsung-mi's Yüan-jen lun with a Modern Commentary. Peter N. Gregory. A Kuroda Institute Book. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu 1995, xv, 264 pp. Cloth \$46.00, pbk \$17.95.

Here is what at first glance looked like a superb book on East Asian Buddhism, but one which was so clearly designed for practical use that an instant judgement on its qualities would have been out of place. But after a decent interval during which the reviewer has been able to witness its actual benefits to students using it to extend their knowledge of the Chinese doctrinal tradition, first impressions have been fully confirmed. Ideally the reader should first become acquainted with the basics of Buddhist terminology in Chinese — that is, with the Chinese equivalents of the everyday stock of Buddhist terms used by all branches of the religion, which arguably still await a proper textbook — but for a quick survey of the main East Asian doctrinal issues and the Chinese vocabulary associated with them, no one has yet improved upon Tsung-mi's short treatise of more than eleven centuries ago.

Nor is it easy to think of a better presentation of his work in the English language than this volume by Peter Gregory. A mere recitation of the table of contents will show the immense care and forethought that has gone into the creation of this book: 'Historical Context', 'Running Translation', 'Annotated Translation

and Commentary' (including full Chinese text), 'Glossary of Names, Terms and Texts', 'A Guide to Supplemental Readings' — all packed with information to lead the student on to higher levels of knowledge. As a guide to Buddhist thought in the Chinese language this book may need updating from time to time in its bibliography, but it is hardly likely to be bettered. There are, of course, one or two points where modern research has not quite caught up with Tsung-mi's historical context, as in the discussion of the Taoist doctrine of spontaneity (pp.90-4), which one day will be read against the background of prolonged inter-religious debates on the topic going back to lost essays by the fifth century Taoist Lu Hsiu-ching, and on to Tsung-mi's tenth century admirer Yen-shou. But most of the doctrinal issues are well understood, and the lesser known doctrinal level known as 'The Teaching of Humans and Gods', translated and discussed here on pp.110-27, has been excellently tackled by Gregory's own investigations, already published elsewhere.

The only element which might be considered missing (though perhaps only from the viewpoint of the teacher with an excess of idle curiosity rather than the student) is an extended account (beyond the bare summary of information given on p.38) treating the historical influence of the *Yüan jen lun*. Clearly the rise of a modern pattern of Buddhist education in the Meiji period fuelled an insatiable demand for annotated editions of Tsung-mi's invaluable textbook, and stimulated at the very least the first French translation by Paul Masson-Oursel, who refers explicitly to its popularity in Japan. But what had been happening before then? The entire history of East Asian Buddhist primers remains, of course, completely unwritten, so this question is by no means supposed to indicate a dereliction on Gregory's part in not telling us. Rather, one hopes that at least some of the students who seem destined to benefit from Tsung-mi's modern reincarnation in the person of Peter Gregory should feel moved to repay the effort expended on them by considering the rôle of the Buddhist teacher in East Asia throughout the ages, and by studying not only the complex and sophisticated systems of thought introduced by this work but also the more quotidian topic of how Buddhist ideas were transmitted through specifically Buddhist forms of edu-

cation. There is certainly a debt here that need to be repaid.

T. H. Barrett

Pāli Buddhism. Edited by Frank J. Hoffman and Deegalle Mahinda. Curzon Press, Richmond 1996. 233 pp. £40. ISBN 0-7007-0359-4.

This is a series of essays under three headings: I. Philological Foundations, II. Insiders' Understandings, III. Philosophical Implications. The book is beautifully produced in red cloth with gold lettering, and with three good pictures of Anurādhapura.

In Section I George D. Bond discusses 'Theravāda Buddhism's Two Formulations of the *Dasa Sīla*', the second of which, rather less well-known, has after the first four precepts: 5. (refraining from) slander; 6. harsh speech; 7. frivolous talk; 8. covetousness; 9. malevolence, and 10. wrong view. It appears that there is an obscure quarrel in Sri Lanka as to which set should be used by lay people, and one hears of some in Britain who favour the second formulation. (Perish the thought that the absence of a ban on alcohol has anything to do with it!) Curiously, alcoholic indulgence is not mentioned in the obvious source of both lists, the *Brahmajāla Sutta* I, 8-10. The second contribution, by Andrew Olendzki, 'A Proposed Model of Early Buddhist Liberation', merely introduces a few red herrings, the chief of which is the alleged problem created by the fact that the Buddha attained his enlightenment at age 45 and died aged 80. The Buddha himself would seem to have said all that needed to be said about that at the end of (again!) the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. After all, if enlightenment entailed immediate death, there would have been no Buddha and no Buddhism. . . I must pass over the doubtless fascinating comparison of '*Dhammapada* and *Tirukkural*' (though I cannot resist quoting the characterisation of Buddhism by a deservedly forgotten writer quoted here for some reason: Materialism — Atheism — Nihilism — Pessimism!). Next comes Christopher Key Chapple's '*Abhidharma* as Paradigm for Practice'. This is informative but not free from errors, the most amusing of which is the reference (p.84) to a work called *Anuruddhā-cariya* ascribed to the late Nārada Thera — which turns out, of

course, to be the latter's version of Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. Though this book is devoted to Pāli Buddhism, Chapple clearly prefers to base himself on the *Abhidharmakośa*, the Sarvāstivādin work which did so much to give 'Hīnayāna' a bad name! Certainly, what is said of the *smṛtyupasthānas* on p.95 differs from what we hear about *satipaṭṭhāna* in Pāli, reflecting as it does rather the older meaning of *smṛti* as 'memory'. Finally some interesting parallels are adduced with Sāṃkhya and even St John of the Cross. Despite some weaknesses, this article does take note of the fact that *Abhidhamma* study can, for some people at least, be an aid to meditation. It is odd that at the end of this book on Pāli Buddhism we find a table of the 46 *Citta Dhammas*, with no mention of the fact that they come from the Sarvāstivādin list.

The second section, *Insiders' Understandings*, starts with the Ven. Deegalle Mahinda on 'The Moral Significance of Buddhist *Nirvāṇa*', and here we sense for the first time the touch of a highly qualified 'insider'. It is of interest to compare his article with the partly overlapping one of Arthur L. Herman on 'Two Dogmas of Buddhism', which belongs to Section III. Herman maintains that all Buddhism is conditioned in large part by two 'dogmas': 1. *anicca-dukkha* (he uses the Sanskrit forms for some reason), and 2. the 'dogma' of *nirvāṇa*. He claims that both 'dogmas' are (a) false and (b) incompatible. The Buddhist attempt to escape from 'future-shock' (i.e. *anicca-dukkha*) is by seeking either the Unchanging (= *Nirvāṇa*) or 'a search for peace and tranquillity in a permanent Self or *Ātman*'. The latter quest he imputes to Mahāyāna. He quotes Walpola Rahula on the *Nirvāṇa* 'solution' and accuses him of 'quibbling'. I can only say that his own arguments are more than a quibble. His final conclusion (p.173) 'that the dogma of *negative nirvāṇa*, wherein liberation is an unchanging state, and the dogma of *anitya-dukkha*, wherein change is an unending state, form a logically inconsistent state', hardly holds water, since the supervention of the latter abolishes the former. Herman's rather desperate intellectual antics contrast with the calm certainty (backed by sound scholarship) of the Ven. Deegalle on the *moral* approach to *Nirvāṇa*. The aspects of *saṃādhi* and *paññā* are not, in this paper, his concern. But in the

context of American 'Zen' and the like, insistence on *sīla* is very understandable. As for Padmasiri de Silva's 'Suicide and Emotional Ambivalence' (p.117), I will merely quote almost the final words: 'though the practicing Buddhist is well equipped with a good critique of eternalism, he needs a more subtle and complex critique of annihilation'. On A.D.P. Kalansuriya's 'The Logical Grammar of the Word "Rebirth"' (p.133) only this: he states that 'the issue about the Buddhist life after death or life before birth is not an empirical one'. Why not? In view of the strong evidence for some sort of 'reincarnation' provided by Ian Stevenson and others, would it not be arguably more profitable to consider this than play Wittgensteinian games with the *concept* of rebirth?

In Section III Ramakrishna Puligandla's 'What is the Status of the Doctrine of Dependent Origination?' (p.175) defines itself with its concluding words: 'the doctrine of dependent origination does not fit any of the standard categories of truth. It is grounded in a primordial phenomenological insight into what it is to exist, to be a phenomenon, and once this insight is articulated and analyzed, the statement of it is but the doctrine of dependent origination, and hence the doctrine is a phenomenological-analytical truth'. I could not have put this better myself . . . There follow two papers incorporating the word 'process'. Shanta Ratnayaka's 'Process Philosophy in Theravāda Buddhism' (p.184) starts with A.N. Whitehead, and notes that various of his followers have held Buddhism in high esteem, though for certain reasons they have been more acquainted with the Mahāyāna than the Theravāda tradition. He argues that the answers to some of their questions lie with Theravāda. Going through the various Buddhist schools in regard to their interpretation of dependent origination, he finds the greatest divergence between Hua-yen with its 'mutual inter-penetration' and the Theravāda standpoint. He concludes with the words 'here at least we all . . . can come to a common ground of understanding where Process Philosophy and Theravāda Buddhism meet together in peace and harmony!'. Ninian Smart follows with 'Theravāda in Processes: Nirvāṇa as a Meta-Process' (p.196). He must be convicted of one mistake, however, when he remarks (p.197) that 'the Theravādin writings ascribe omniscience to the Buddha'. True, this is affirmed in the late Paṭisambhidamagga, but

in the Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta (M 71), the Buddha rejects this idea (it is perhaps significant that this particular sutta has no equivalent in the Agamas). Smart's idea that the mysterious X of Nibbāna is a kind of process is lucidly followed up, not so much seeking a solution as pointing the way for future research. A valuable and thought-provoking essay written in clear English. The final paper, Frank J. Hoffman's "Orientalism" in Buddhology' (p.207), concerns itself with Edward Said's view of 'Orientalism' — a useful reminder of attitudes the West is learning to discard.

As a whole, the book is rather disappointing, though much may still be learnt from it — especially perhaps from Ninian Smart's contribution. If I have missed or misunderstood certain points, it is because I am not a philosopher. Somehow, I don't even wish to be one!

Maurice Walshe

Subhṛīkāh. Festgabe für Helmut Eimer. Edited by Michael Hahn, Jens-Uwe Hartmann and Roland Steiner. (Monographien zu den Sprachen und Literaturen des indo-tibetischen Kulturraumes, Band 28) Indica et Tibetica Verlag, Swisttal-Odendorf 1996. xxii, 282 pp. DM48. ISBN 3-923776-28-4.

Collections of learned papers in honour of an academic written by his colleagues are certainly edifying for the person concerned, but tracking the papers down, when one needs them, does present some problems for bibliographers and researchers, especially if they cover a variety of topics. This one is no exception. It contains contributions in the fields of philology, secular and religious literature, religious studies, textual criticism and history, quite in keeping with the title of the series. Prof. Heimer (born 1936) specialises in the history of the transmission of the Tibetan Kanjur but also teaches Sanskrit at the University of Bonn. The Bibliography of his works has 127 items, besides joint articles with others and volumes for which he acted as editor.

Some of the contributions in this volume are certainly of interest to Buddhist scholars and some even to general readers involved or interested in Buddhism, e.g. the article 'Buddhas eigenes Land?' by Karl-Heinz Golzio (Bonn). The title is a variation of the Christian expression 'God's (own) country' favoured

in some Christian quarters in the USA. It has its ancestry in the idea of the chosen people and land and echoes also in political speeches proclaiming the 'manifest destiny' of a nation. The author investigates an analogous phenomenon in countries where there was or is a symbiosis between the Buddhist religion and the state and/or society, such as the India of the Maurya dynasty, Sri Lanka, Burma or Thailand. Another article is on the topic of transference of merit: 'Verdienstübertragung im Hīnayāna und Mahāyāna' by Adelheid Hermann-Pfandt (Marburg). While this concept is at home in Mahāyāna, the author finds the first dated evidence for it in Hīnayāna sources in India and Ceylon in the third century BCE. Its occurrence becomes frequent after the turn of the era; but unlike in Mahāyāna, in Hīnayāna it has remained a 'worldly' procedure enhancing samsāric prospects, but not helping to achieve Nirvāṇa. An important piece of research into the cult of Maitreya is presented by Hans-Joachim Klimkeit (Bonn) on the basis of a Vaibhāṣika text translated into Old Turkish from Tocharian. It has no Indian, Tibetan or Chinese parallels, but betrays knowledge of Indian sources from which the Tocharian version was probably compiled. Peter Skilling (Nonthaburi, Thailand) contributes 'Verses associated with the *Rāhula-Sūtra*' which are known, besides the Theravāda version in Pāli, from two Sarvāstivāda versions in Tibetan and Chinese. Researchers into Mahāyāna will appreciate the last contribution, by Akira Yuyama (Hamburg), 'A Critical Survey of Philological Studies of the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*'. Some other contributions, not related to Buddhist topics, are equally valuable.

Karel Werner

Buddhism. A Very Short Introduction. Damien Keown. OUP, Oxford 1996. xiii, 141 pp. £4.99. ISBN 0-19-285329-5.

One might doubt the wisdom of compiling yet another primer on Buddhism were it not for the fact that publishers' print-runs are invariably limited, resulting in even subsequently treasured works soon becoming out of print, and for the desirability to produce material that will stand the test of time.

In the present work the Senior Lecturer in Indian Religion at London University's Goldsmiths' College has succeeded in pre-

sending a highly readable and straightforward account of Buddhism which warrants the attention of not only the serious student but the public at large. Taking his cue from the respected doyen of Comparative Religion, Ninian Smart, the author first of all justifies Buddhism as a 'religion' — although the cognoscenti might query the necessity for this exercise — on the basis of seven dimensions (the observable and shared experience) of religion as generally understood: the practical and ritual, experiential and emotional, narrative and mythical, doctrinal and philosophical, ethical and legal, social and institutional, material (i.e., embodied in bricks and mortar, works of art, pilgrimage sites).

Having established the framework upon which subsequent discussion will prove meaningful, Keown then briskly summarises the life of 'The Buddha' and the essential teachings of 'Karma and Rebirth' and 'The Four Noble Truths' (Chapters 2-4). In the second section attention is drawn to the dynamic concept of the universe in which 'world-systems are thought to undergo cycles of evolution and decline lasting billions of years . . . Naturally, the beings who inhabit the physical universes are not unaffected by these events, and indeed there is some suggestion that it is the moral status of the inhabitants that determines the fate of the world-system. A world inhabited by ignorant and selfish people, for example, would decline at a faster speed than one with a wise and virtuous population. This notion that beings are not just the caretakers of their environment, but in some sense create it, has important implications for Buddhist thinking on ecology' (p.32). The realms of rebirth are likened to 'an office block with thirty-one floors. At the bottom is hell' (p.35) — not an inappropriate analogy in an urban *milieu* where, inevitably, the ground floor of any office is prone to a disproportionate quantity of external traffic noise, pollution and lack of natural light. In the same example 'karma functions as the elevator' [has an American editor inserted his oar?] 'that takes people from one floor of the building to another' (p.39).

'*The Truth of Arising* (Samudaya)' (pp.51-4) clarifies issues within the context of modern society and to an extent not perhaps noticeable elsewhere. Thus, the bald statements: 'The continuity of individual existence from one life to the next is simply

the result of the accumulated momentum of desire'; 'The desire to destroy can also lead to self-denying and self-negating behaviour. Low self-esteem and thoughts such as "I'm no good", or "I'm a failure", are manifestations of this attitude when directed towards the self. In extreme forms it can lead to physically self-destructive behaviour such as suicide'; 'Having positive goals for oneself and others (such as attaining nirvana), desiring that others should be happy, and wishing to leave the world a better place than one found it, are all examples of positive and wholesome desires which do not count as *taṇhā*'; 'Whereas wrong desires restrict and fetter, right desires enhance and liberate'. Concluding Chapter 4, Keown writes '... the practice of the Eightfold Path is a kind of modelling process: the eight factors reveal how a Buddha would live, and by living like a Buddha one gradually becomes one. The Eightfold Path is thus a path of self-transformation: an intellectual, emotional, and moral restructuring in which a person is reoriented from selfish, limited objectives towards a horizon of possibilities and opportunities for fulfilment' (p.58).

Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to 'The Mahāyāna' and 'Buddhism in Asia'. In the former the author recounts the generally accepted justification for the advent of dissident forms of Buddhism but this reviewer remains sceptical of the specious reasoning surrounding the 'development' of 'graduated teaching'. Thus, 'Just as an experienced teacher would not teach an advanced topic such as calculus to students just beginning mathematics, so the Buddha had revealed only limited teachings ... which he knew his early followers could assimilate. The reason for this was that the true depth and scope of the Dharma - now fully revealed in the Mahāyāna - was profound beyond measure, and rather than confuse and overwhelm people the Buddha had used "skilful means" (*upāya-kauśalya*) to put the truth before them in a simplified form' (pp.64-5). However, the question may be asked: 'Is there any objective and tangible evidence for assuming that either a well-educated monastic élite or the general public had a better grasp of the Dharma five centuries after the demise of the historical Buddha?' As for the notorious Parable of the Burning House in the *Lotus Sūtra* (p.65), to liken the children with 'the early followers' (i.e., Hīnayānists)

although *not*, it must be emphasised, by Keown, is plainly patronising. Subsequently (on pp.70-1), the author elucidates the contentious Madhyamaka doctrine equating Nirvāṇa with Saṃsāra and only space precludes reproducing his plausible argument.

Chapters 7 and 8 summarise 'Meditation' and 'Ethics'. Mindful of the publicity generated in these contemporary issues, Keown digresses on 'Abortion', 'Rights' and 'Human Rights' (pp.106-12) and the whole question of whether there is an actual concept of rights in Buddhism neatly dovetails with the thought-provoking article by Colin Tudge, 'Rights and Wrongs' (*Independent on Sunday*, 16 March 97), who 'argues for a new moral approach in our relationship with all creatures'.

In the final chapter (9), 'Buddhism in the West', Keown makes clear that our 'knowledge of Buddhism has come through three main channels: the labour of Western scholars; the work of philosophers, intellectuals, writers, and artists; and the arrival of Asian immigrants. . . ' (p.117). He then skilfully encapsulates the saga of its reception, influence and partial assimilation in the Western world, highlighting significant secondary literary works, Buddhist movements and trends, e.g., 'socially engaged Buddhism' and the emergence of the 'CyberSangha', a network of Buddhist groups in the USA linked by computers. (Corrections: the Indian ascetics mentioned by the Greeks were 'gymnosophists' whilst the corruption of bodhisattva was 'Josaphat'. Incidentally, Dr Frances Wood, Head of the Chinese Dept at the British Library, made a convincing case on Channel 4, 19 Nov. 96, for disproving Marco Polo's trip to and stay in China.)

Keown concludes by citing Arnold Toynbee's description of the encounter between Buddhism and the West as 'one of the greatest collisions of the twenty-first century. To this confluence of cultures Buddhism brings a sophisticated psychology, techniques of meditation, a profound metaphysics, and a universally admired code of ethics' (p.131).

In an otherwise sound work, this reviewer would only quibble over the translation of *virya* as 'courage' (p.66). Although Edgerton's *BHSD* (Delhi 1970, p.497) *virīya* (= Skt *vīrya*) has 'heroism', this does not convey the intended *physical* meaning of 'vigour, energy, effort, exertion' (*PED* 1972, p.634).

RBW

Gotama Buddha. Mein Weg zum Erwachen. Eine Autobiographie. Detlef Kantowsky und Ekkehard Sass. Beniger, Zürich/Düsseldorf 1996. 111pp. Price/ISBN not noted.

This 'autobiography' of the Buddha is the latest volume in a series of portraits of major historical figures (the previous volumes being two on Mahatma Gandhi and one on Rabindranath Tagore) combining selections of their own sayings or writings with numerous photographic illustrations that provide a relevant visual context. Both joint authors have a long-standing involvement with Buddhism. Detlef Kantowsky, Professor of Sociology at the University of Konstanz in Germany, specialises in intercultural studies, with particular reference to India (where he has done much field work) and Sri Lanka. He is the author of numerous publications on Buddhism and general editor of the 'Buddhistischer Modernismus' series published by the University of Konstanz. Ekkehard Sass, a broadcasting professional, is a Pāli scholar with a number of publications to his name. In the present work, Sass has been responsible for the new translations from Pāli into German of the texts jointly selected by the authors, and Kantowsky has supplied the original photographs taken by him in India over a period of some twenty-five years.

With its large format, glossy paper and many striking full-page sepia photographs, this attractively produced volume might at first sight appear to fall into the coffee-table book category. It is, however, much more than that. Its aim is to put before the modern reader unfamiliar with the subject a concise and clear account of the Buddha's life, and an outline of essential teachings, in his own words as found in the Pāli Canon, recast in immediately accessible contemporary language. The photographs facing almost every page of text are not intended, we are told, simply to provide local colour, nor as specific illustrations to facing texts, but to bring home to the reader some of the still strikingly unchanged aspects of the lands where the Buddha preached and the way of life of the people he addressed some 2,500 years ago, thus adding a living visual dimension to the written word.

It must be said that *Mein Weg zum Erwachen* is remarkably successful within its own terms of reference, and can be well

recommended (with one reservation which I shall come to in a moment) as a sound and sensible introduction to Buddha the man and his teachings, mercifully untainted by the woolly mysticism and exotic longings that tend all too often these days to obscure the clarity of the Dhamma.

The structure of the book is as straightforward as the language. The stages of the Buddha's life, cast in autobiographical language and stripped of supernatural embellishments, are related in seven main chapters whose titles clearly signpost the progression of life and insight: 'Growing Up and Living Well', 'Going Forth and Learning', 'Seeking and Practising on One's Own', 'Awakening and Seeing Anew', 'Going into the World and Teaching', 'Grasping the Teaching Correctly', 'Letting Go'.

The essentials of the teaching are set forth clearly and soberly in a modern version of the words of the Pāli Canon. The level of presentation is simple, as is consistent with the non-specialised nature of the book, but well balanced. The one aspect on which I have reservations is the tendency of the authors to use, in a few instances, language identifying the experience of non-self (*anattā*) and of the compassion and loving-kindness characteristic of enlightenment with a Oneness-with-the-All conception which is typical of traditional Hinduism (and of certain contemporary indiscriminating syncretistic trends in the West today), but certainly not part of what the Buddha taught. Thus on p.15, in a passage from Sutta 14 of the Dīgha Nikāya, the simple statement: 'compassion for all beings is good' (*sādhū bhūtānukampā*) becomes: 'it is good to feel oneself ONE with all beings' (*gut ist es, sich mit allen Wesen EINS zu fühlen*), with 'ONE' capitalised for emphasis. Other examples of this tendency can be found at pp.24 and 30. It is a pity that the authors (like many others before them in the long history of Buddhism) have allowed themselves to be carried away in trying to spell out what the Buddha, for good reasons, left specifically unsaid.

This being said, the authors must be congratulated on their discerning selection of material and on the entirely successful translation of it into easy-flowing current language which (completed by splendid photographs) conveys a convincing picture of the Buddha's human warmth and sound commonsense as well

as his unique gifts and achievements against the background of his native land.

Many who might otherwise not do so may, through this attractive presentation, be enabled to perceive the relevance and soundness of the Compassionate One's message. It would be good if it were to be made more generally accessible in an equally well-crafted English version.

Amadeo Sole-Leris

Étude linguistique de nissaya birmans: traduction commentée de textes bouddhiques. William Pruitt. Presses de l'École française d'Extrême Orient, monographies, no. 174, Paris 1994. 287 pp. No price given.

Bhante O venerable ones! *Samgho* the community of monks *suñātu* let them hear me (*mama*) my *vacanam* words. *Ajja* today's *uposatho* sabbath day *pannaraso* (is the sabbath of) the fifteenth (day of the month).

Burma is well known for its long tradition of study in the Pāli texts of Theravāda Buddhism, and one of the products of this work is a rich crop of *nissaya* translations: Pāli texts in which each word or phrase of Pāli is immediately followed by its equivalent in Burmese. The Pāli-English sample above attempts to reproduce the method.

William Pruitt's book on *nissaya* has grown like a tree from a seed. It began as a linguistic study of a *nissaya* translation of the Bhikkhu-pātimokkha, a collection of rules taken from the Vinaya Piṭaka and relating to the conduct of the Sangha. This study was published as 'Un *nissaya* birman de la Bibliothèque nationale, le Patimokkha. Étude linguistique'. *Cahiers de l'Asie du Sud-Est* 19 (1986), pp.83-119; 21 (1987), pp.7-47; 22 (1987), pp.35-57. From this starting point the author became interested in the variations in translation, spelling and style between different manuscripts and editions of his text. Then his researches spread into the history of *nissaya* translation, and thence into the use of Burmese *nissaya* by early Western scholars. All these branches are encompassed in the present work.

The heart of the work (some 50 pages) is an extract from the Bhikkhu-pātimokkha *nissaya* written by Ashin Munindasāra in

1786. The extract is presented with a translation into French and an *apparatus criticus* noting variant readings in four other versions of the text.

This sample of the text is preceded in the book by three chapters setting out its background. Chapter 1 begins with the Sinhala and Mon equivalents of *nissaya* (respectively *sanne* and *trā-ai*), which started earlier than the Burmese *nissaya* and perhaps inspired Burmese scholars to write their own. The chapter continues with a brief survey of early Burmese *nissaya*, which are first mentioned in the thirteenth century, and this is followed by a detailed and lively account of the surge of activity in Buddhist textual studies under King Bodawpaya (1782-1819). This section makes excellent use of Dr Than Tun's collection of documents of the period, *Royal Orders of Burma* (10 vols, The Centre for South East Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1983-90), and includes summaries of the lives and works of three eminent *nissaya* translators of the period: Ashin Dhammābhinanda, Ashin Munindasāra and U Budh.

In Chapter 2 Pruitt sets out his illuminating and industriously researched findings on the linguistic work of the early Western missionaries to Burma. He covers all the great names in the history of Burmese language study in the West, including Mantegazza, Percoto and Bigandet among the Roman Catholics, and Carey, Hough and Judson among the Baptists. Many of these scholars had learned Sanskrit before reaching Burma, and there is some evidence that they used this knowledge together with Burmese *nissaya* to help them learn Burmese: a curious reversal of function, since *nissaya* were created in order to help Burmese speakers learn Pāli.

Chapter 3 is a description and discussion of the Bhikkhu-pātimokkha, covering the nature, style, purpose and content of the rules it presents.

The entire second half of the book (Chapters 5 to 8) is devoted to the language of the text and its different versions. It offers extensive and minutely detailed lists and tables of variations in translation, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, commentary, punctuation and so on. The section on the abbreviations used by the *nissaya* writers (pp.233-48) is spectacular and a far

more comprehensive listing than any so far published.

The material thus presented can be used to study the consistency of style and translation between one *nissaya* and another, and to compare different interpretations of the Pāli. Pruitt does suggest a few themes that could be pursued (pp.268-9), but in places this part of the book reads more like notes for a thesis than the thesis itself. It would have been satisfying to hear more from him on the insights to be gleaned from such a mass of detail. He also says little about the influential part played by *nissaya* translations in the establishment of an approved literary style in Burmese. Perhaps he felt that the topic had been adequately covered by the authors he refers to (e.g. p.18, n.4; p.12, n.2), but a more extended treatment would have helped to emphasise the importance of *nissaya* in Burmese literary history.

Predictably, there are points of detail on which readers may be inclined to question Pruitt's interpretation. The suffix -လျှင် can be used either as a verb suffix meaning 'if' or as a phrase suffix marking emphasis. He tries to force the first function onto some phrases where the second is clearly the one intended (p.168 ခိုးခြင်းသည်လျှင်, translated as 's'il y a vol de', and p.177 ငြိသည်သာလျှင်တည်း, explained as 'un complément de manière').

In the phrase နှစ်တောင့်ထွာတောင့် မှာတ္တပါသ် 'a hatthapāsa (i.e.) two cubits and one span' (p.175 and again at p.216), Pruitt offers the awkward explanation that ထွာ is a verb and တောင့် is a relative clause meaning 'which measures', rather than opting for the more straightforward interpretation which would have ထွာ meaning 'one span' and တောင့် as the standard *nissaya* marker for numeral adjectives. Contrast *cattāri etāni kammāni* လေးပါးတုန်တောင့် ဤကံတို့ကို 'these four actions', p.75, where he does not hesitate to recognise တောင့် as marking the numeral adjective.

Pruitt is well aware that the auxiliary verb -အံ့ is used in *nissaya* to indicate that the Pāli verb is in the passive (see e.g. his comment at p.181, or his entry for -အံ့ in the glossary, p.265). Nonetheless, he translates မေးအံ့သောသူ (p.178), itself translating Pāli *puṭṭha* (p.83) as 'celui à qui l'on doit poser les questions', as if -အံ့ here carried its other meaning 'should, ought'. In another comment (p.217) on the same passage he says 'le contexte seul permet d'interpréter -အံ့ dans un sens actif ou passif, le texte

birman ne l'indique par aucun marquer', as if he had inexplicably failed to notice the presence of the passive marker -အံ့ in the phrase.

However, points such as these are minor and not numerous. Overall the author's painstaking research and impressive documentation inspire full confidence in his findings. His book has much to offer the linguist, the historian of Buddhist studies in Burma and the historian of Western studies of Burmese.

John Okell

Der Weg der weissen Wolken. Texte, Bilder und Dokumente aus dem Leben von Lama Anagarika Govinda (1898-1985). Edited by Detlef Kantowsky. (*Ibid.*, Forsch. 12), Konstanz 1996. 233 pp. No price given. ISBN 3-930959-08-9.

Lama Govinda, the centenary of whose birth next year will be commemorated in Germany with a *Festschrift*, is well known in the English-speaking world through his many publications. He was also the founder of the Ārya Maitreya Maṇḍala (AMM) order which is active mainly in Germany, but also has branches in Austria and Hungary and adherents in some other countries; the order is steeped in Tibetan tradition, but stresses a 'Triyāna' approach and is not connected with any official Tibetan Buddhist movement or organisation.

The publication of this volume in the Buddhist research series of the University of Konstanz is a testimony to the importance ascribed to Lama Govinda's personality and to the significance of his work for Buddhism in modern times. The title chosen for the book is fittingly the same one which Lama Govinda himself gave to his well-loved autobiography *The Way of the White Clouds* and it is a very useful complementary companion to it. Besides a short biography in the form of dated events in Govinda's life, it contains a biographical sketch from the pen of Advayavajra (Dr. med. Karl-Heinz Gottmann), Lama Govinda's successor as head of the AMM, and a number of Govinda's less known articles, essays and notes, some of them previously unpublished, some originally written for various English journals and translated into German, and some extracts from his books. There is also an Epilogue which was found

among his papers after his death. It starts: 'The work has been completed, and the rest of this life will at best be an epilogue and a preparation for the great transfiguration. . .'

There is also a bibliography of Govinda's works assembled by the editor with two other collaborators, and at the end of the book are facsimiles of various documents pertaining to Govinda's life. Among them is a 'Certificate of good character' issued by the municipality of St. Blasien on 3.7.1919 (heaven knows for what purpose!), his identity card and passport, a reference by Rabindranath Tagore recommending him for lectureships in Indian universities, notes from his diaries and many other memorabilia. Of interest is a letter from the British Deputy Secretary of the Government of the United Provinces to the Home Department of the Government of India dated 17.11.1936; it recommends rejecting Govinda's application for a certificate of naturalisation 'in view of the suspicious international activities of the applicant' who also 'has not satisfied the local Government that. . . he is of good character'. Another document from the government's file on him says: 'Govinda has been regarded as a very clever, intelligent person of mysterious habits and behaviour'; and also: 'His association with Japanese Buddhist priests in India, though slight, has been regarded with suspicion, particularly in view of Japan's Pan-Asian policy, and every effort is being made to have his movements and activities in India watched'. His application was duly rejected, but granted two years later after some interventions, when it was found that 'Govinda has lived down any suspicions attaching to him in the past'. It did not save him from internment when war broke out, though, because of his German origin, although that put him in touch with Nyānaponika Thera, his fellow German, brought to the same internment camp in North India from his Forest Hermitage in Ceylon. It was the start of a fruitful life-long friendship.

An additional human touch is given by the publication of photographs of Lama Govinda, starting with a picture of him as a sweet boy of seven and continuing with further stages in his life, including pictures of his wife Li Gotami (one of them in Venice in 1960, another also with Nyānaponika during a visit to Germany in 1972, and the last one in Mill Valley, California, on

his death bed in 1985 at the age of 86). Reproductions of two of his charcoal drawings and one pastel (of the 'Holy green lake' in Sikkim) supplement this well produced publication which came out in time for the opening of an exhibition of Lama Govinda's pictures in a gallery at the University of Konstanz (7-31 May 1996). He was a truly integrated personality; an academic, philosopher, artist, mystic, spiritual guide and, as his successor in AMM says of him, using Sarastro's words from 'The Magic Flute'. '...ein Mensch' (which, I suppose, has to be translated nowadays as 'a human being').

Karel Werner

The Wisdom of the Buddha. Jean Boisselier. Thames and Hudson, London 1994. 192 pp. £6.95. ISBN 0-500-30047-X

The Vision of the Buddha. Tom Lowenstein. Macmillan, London 1996. 184 pp. £9.99. ISBN 0-333-65380-7.

It gives great pleasure to promote unreservedly two such attractive and complementary paperbacks authored, moreover, by committed Buddhists whose empathy with their subject matter is revealed on every page which both informs and inspires.

Wisdom is essentially a biography of the Buddha, written in a persuasive, flowing style and translated by Carey Lovelace from the original French edition, *La sagesse du Bouddha* (Gallimard, Paris 1993). The author is a retired member of the EFEO whose official delegate he was in Cambodia and in charge of the conservation of Angkor Wat up to 1955. Thereafter he lectured on Oriental Languages and Civilisations and Indian and South East Asian Archaeology in Paris, retiring in 1980 as Emeritus Professor at the Sorbonne. Doubtless as a direct result of his academic positions, this pocket-sized book is profusely illustrated with reproductions by Editoriale Libreria, Trieste, of sculpture, bas-reliefs, frescoes and temple paintings from Central, South and South East Asia. All in all, a sheer delight to both the eye and the mind.

An extended appendix, with black and white photos, has been added by both French and British publishers. 'Documents' (pp.129-84) includes an anthology of texts in translation, 'The images of Buddhas', a brief historical survey of Buddhism

extracted from the works of Bareau, Filliozat and Lamotte, 'The expansion of Buddhism in Asia' from secondary works in French and 'Buddhism in the West' abbreviated from Peter Harvey's *Introduction to Buddhism*.

Vision emanates from a student in Pāli and Sanskrit in Sri Lanka who graduated from the University of Washington, Seattle, although latterly his interest seems to have been focused on shamanism (which might account for the disproportionate attention given to Tibetan esoteric culture in his otherwise excellent, balanced and sympathetic compilation). As with *Wisdom*, this is profusely illustrated and beautifully produced, this time in Singapore. For a beginner it represents an adequate overview of the historical and doctrinal field, comprising concise chapters on 'The Early Days of the Buddha', 'The Enlightenment', 'From Enlightenment to Death', 'Early Indian and Mahayana Buddhism', 'Theravada or Southern Buddhism', 'Buddhism in China', 'Buddhism in Japan', 'Buddhism in Tibet', and 'Buddhism Comes to the West' (although 'Buddhism in modern Europe' confines itself to two pages, one each for the UK and Samye Ling, followed by four pages for the USA). An appendix, 'Documentary References' includes 'Selected Buddhist sites' from Asia, 'Useful addresses', 'Glossary' and 'Further Reading'.

One regrets the absence of diacritical marks, otherwise the only quibbles this reviewer had was with the author's use of 'death' in the context of the Buddha and, on two occasions, the interpretation of *nirvana* as 'extinction' when an extension — 'of the defilements' — would have resolved this doctrinal misunderstanding.

A brace of books to treasure and enjoy!

RBW

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